







.

GEORGE WASHINGTON TRAVELED THIS WAY  
PERSONALIZED VISITS TO THE  
WASHINGTON COUNTRY

.









LIFE SIZE STATUE OF WASHINGTON BY HOUDON





# GEORGE WASHINGTON TRAVELED THIS WAY

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PERSONALIZED VISITS TO THE  
WASHINGTON COUNTRY

BY FRED L. HOLMES

Author of "Abraham Lincoln  
Traveled This Way"

Foreword by

GLENN FRANK

President of the University of Wisconsin

With map and forty-three illustrations from  
original photographs



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TO  
THE MEMORY  
OF  
MY BELOVED FATHER  
IN WHOSE  
INTEGRITY OF PURPOSE  
SENSE OF JUSTICE  
AND  
DEVOTION TO HUMAN VALUES  
THE SPIRIT OF WASHINGTON  
LIVED AGAIN

•





## PREFACE

THE George Washington revealed in this volume is neither the saint pictured by Parson Mason Weems nor the schemer portrayed by Rupert Hughes. He is just a plain man, aristocratic by birth but democratic by choice; a leader gifted with unusual common sense.

If one scans the volumes of his diaries alone, he emerges cold and pulseless. To read those same records within the legislative halls where he sat, upon the battlefields where he led, or within the solemn precincts where he shaped the destinies of a Nation is to witness the deathless pages quicken with the glow of life, color, individuality, and high purpose.

I took the diaries and dull stories of Washington along with me to the byways, battlegrounds, and bivouacs of his service. Against the background of their original setting, a new Washington arose. I return him to you a leader of sincerity, solidity, and common understanding,—an athlete, home lover, farmer, soldier, public-spirited citizen. For Washington is best revealed in the environment in which he labored.

I did not undertake this task without urging. It was first the suggestion of the publishers, later confirmed by my devoted friend, Dr. Glenn Frank, President of the University of Wisconsin, that such a volume would be welcome. He has generously read and corrected the manuscript. I gratefully acknowledge his cooperation.

Once the mission was decided, I made of the journey to the Washington places a family party—my helpful wife, her sister, Miss Margaret Pollack, always encouraging, and Miss Beverly Hills, a high school student, who was to enliven each day with the keen, fresh questions of an exploring mind. Revisits to some of the Washington haunts have been made in company of Congressman Harry Sauthoff of Wisconsin, long a student of Washington's life, and Mr. Frank W. Kuehl, an attorney with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation at Washington, D. C.

Along the way many friends have aided me with scrap books, local literature, papers, and pictures. I thank these unrecorded assistants. Senator Robert M. La Follette has gathered for me the numerous official publications both of the Washington Bicentennial Commission and of Congress, and placed them at my disposal. His staff has collected new material and searched the Congressional Library files for data not usually accessible. My acknowledgment is due to all these associates.

Mrs. Eleanore Droster, my office assistant, has diligently checked the numerous biographies and official reports to verify the historical accuracy of statements here presented. She is truly a fact-finder, and her service has been invaluable. In this work, she has been assisted by Miss Marian Ellickson, whose eager mind has inspired many of the pages.

Among the many whose debt I feel is one friend of a life-time. Mr. Louis W. Bridgman, editor of publications for the Extension Division of the University of Wisconsin, who has given all too freely of his time and talents. He has been helpful in his criticisms; re-

sourceful in his suggestions. Toward whatever merit this book may have, he has contributed a full share.

On four tours every important landmark eventful in Washington's life may be visited. All trips should start from the National Capital.

**FIRST TOUR:** Through Maryland to Wakefield, Ferry Farm, Fredericksburg, Richmond, Poplar Grove, Williamsburg, and Yorktown.—Two days.

**SECOND TOUR:** To Alexandria, Winchester, down the Shenandoah Valley, Cumberland, Old National Road to Fort Necessity, Braddock's Field near Pittsburgh, as far as Old Fort Le Boeuf, now Waterford, Pennsylvania. Return should be made by way of Bedford, Pennsylvania, the site of the Whiskey Rebellion. All the way the scenery is beautiful.—Three days.

**THIRD TOUR:** Battlefield route to Chadd's Ford on the Brandywine, Valley Forge, Philadelphia, Trenton, Washington Crossing, Princeton, Monmouth, Rocky Hill, Somerville, Morristown, New York, Newburgh, Springfield, Boston. Return by way of Annapolis, where Washington resigned his commission.—One week.

**FOURTH TOUR:** A week-end at Mount Vernon. Visit Washington's Mill, Woodlawn, Gunston Hall, Pohick Church, Falls Church, and Christ Church of Alexandria, and the Alexandria Lodge Hall,—all in the vicinity.—Two days.

While making these personalized visits to the Washington country, I have carried in my pocket a stanza from Abraham Ryan which has enthused me with my task:

"A Land without Ruins is a Land without Memories;  
A Land without Memories is a Land without History;

Give me the Land where Ruins are spread;  
And the Living tread light on the Hearts of the  
Dead;  
Give me the Land that has Legends and Lays  
That tell of the Memories of long vanished Days."

If you will follow me in the footsteps of George Washington, I will give you back the true George Washington, who can be found neither in books nor in libraries, but lives incarnate in the hearts of Americans.

FRED L. HOLMES.

Madison, Wisconsin.

## FOREWORD

FIVE years ago I expressed an undisguised enthusiasm over the technique Mr. Holmes employed in his "Abraham Lincoln Traveled This Way." It was not, as I said, a biography. It was not a guide book. It was not a travel diary. It was all three of these in one. With camera and car and a spirit that really cared for the values incarnate in Lincoln, Mr. Holmes rode the highways and trudged up the byways that Lincoln traveled from boyhood to martyrdom and, by a subtlety of craftsmanship that kept itself in the background, enabled us to live along with Lincoln rather than read after him.

And now, by the same device, he has made George Washington live again and, in this volume, we may live along with the sponsor and spiritual architect of the American Republic from the sunrise to the sunset of his magnificently productive career.

Here, as in his Lincoln book, Mr. Holmes has followed the career of Washington chronologically from the rising years of his youth through his adventures as surveyor, soldier, and statesman and on to the years of his retirement. He has made innumerable "personalized visits" to the Washington country. He has literally taken every important journey that Washington made in war and in peace, has himself taken or collected photographs of the scenes and shrines that still

stand in silent reminder of the Washington epic, has talked with descendants of the men and women of the Revolutionary phase who still live amidst these scenes and shrines, and has interlaced the results of all these visits with an incomparably vivid and simple recital of the whole Washington story.

A very sure sense of selection has guided Mr. Holmes in his handling of data. The archives have been plundered for materials, but materials have not been dragged in by the ears just to make a show of erudition. Only the relevant has been admitted. Use has been made of only the data that illuminate and bring again to life the meaning and movement of the Washington career. Mr. Holmes has stuck to the blueprint of his purpose in this as in his Lincoln book. He has not attempted a new biography of Washington. He has drawn upon historical research for the single purpose of giving a sense of life and reality to a journey that follows Washington step by step in his amazing odyssey from the serenity of days at Mount Vernon, through the stress of war, to the stirring adventures in fashioning a new nation. The story marches with precision. It is not cluttered with irrelevant details.

A very human Washington emerges from this book. Mr. Holmes has sought neither to psychoanalyze with skepticism nor to canonize with credulity. He has told a straight story as a good reporter with a sound grounding in history would tell it. He is in the line of Lodge, Scudder, Ford, Wilson, Wister, and other students who have contributed to the humanization of the historic Washington.

When I finished reading the manuscript I had the sense of having sat in intimate conference and of having

fought through stirring campaigns with a great contemporary. And that is the test of a book that seeks to bring the dead great to life.

GLENN FRANK.

Madison, Wisconsin.





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## CHAPTER I

### IN TAPESTRIES OF AN OLD WORLD

#### WASHINGTON'S BIRTHPLACE

ON a crest of the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia, where the Spotswood trail rises through a succession of hills and dales to a surprising view of Shenandoah Valley, a tablet has been erected by the state. It commemorates the romantic bravery of the troop of gentlemen, Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, who first laid claim to the rich valley lands of the West for use by the expanding Seaboard settlements. Born sixteen years later, George Washington spent his official life in making the dreams of these first members of the American Knight-Errantry a reality.

For more than a century after the founding of Jamestown, settlements clung to the Seaboard. To the early pioneers, the haze-garmented chain of the Blue Ridge mountains remained an unknown land shrouded in mystery—a savage solitude and a menacing barrier, blocking all advance.

To discover the unknown West beyond this misty veil became the fixed ambition of Governor Alexander Spotswood, English colonial executive of Virginia, appointed in 1710 by the Crown. Although by birth a Scotchman, Spotswood dreamed of honors in far-off lands, and the spirit of adventurous knighthood stirred in his veins. Organizing a party of fifty gentlemen in



1716, each with glittering sword, taking with them their negro servants and Indian guides, riding well-groomed horses, carrying a supply of flour, wines and champagnes and living off the game of the wilderness, this jovial party of the aristocratic and landed gentry of the New World crossed the present State of Virginia—north of Orange. The trail was westward on the picturesque colonial highway that now bears so fittingly the Governor's name.

As the pilgrimage proceeded, it became exceedingly popular. Up the jugged and rugged mountains the troopers climbed. On the scenic ramparts, not far from Elkton, they viewed the Shenandoah Valley, lush with trees and vegetation. Beside the Shenandoah River they planted an emblem declaring all the lands thus drained to be the property of the King of England.<sup>1</sup> Then to encourage other gentlemen to be more courageous and venturesome, the Governor upon his return to Williamsburg presented each member of the party with a Golden Horseshoe engraved with the motto, "Thus it is a pleasure to cross the mountains." With this act, Knighthood took its place in an early life of Virginia.

The struggle to hold this unexplored West for the growing Seaboard settlements encompasses the life of George Washington. For forty years his missions of peace and exploits in war followed in exciting rapidity. He became a surveyor in the Shenandoah Valley at sixteen, was the official messenger of the Crown to warn the French out of the Ohio Valley at twenty-one, fought with Braddock to hold the West at twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, John, *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors*, Vol. II, p. 386; *Key to Inscriptions on Virginia Markers*, (State Publication, 1932), pp. 25, 59; *Virginia, The Beckoning Land*, (State Publication), pp. 10, 18.

three, organized the armies to hold the West and Seaboard inseparable during the Revolutionary War, and then, in a final scene, ruled the united units as the Nation's first president.

Dreaming the dreams of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, I have followed his trail. Sometimes the way has been obliterated by the encroachment of great cities; sometimes the paths he trod have become tangled with later more colorful episodes of history. But always I found the trail again and rode on to new and joyous experiences. At times, when I passed through deep valleys, glorious with the riotous autumn finery of the mountains, or over battle-fields hallowed by the blood of unrecorded patriots, I felt he went ahead—he, the greatest horse-back rider of his generation. The highways he trod reveal a true Washington and rob his painted portraits of any haughtiness or austerity. Instead, there remains the sagacious, vigorous, daring companion, cool of judgment, rich in common sense, but neither demigod nor saint.

Washington and Virginia are inseparable. In the Old Dominion the Atlantic Seaboard is traversed by many noble rivers, but none more beautiful than the historic Potomac, a part of its northern boundary. Between the Potomac and the James and then westward lies the heart of the Washington country. It is a land where the adventures of a colonial civilization have left a romantic touch. Plantations still abound in the tapestries of an Old World. The atmosphere of the aristocracy is there. Old palatial homes<sup>1</sup> of the Washingtons, Lees, Carters, Tayloes, and Fitzhughs, with their old-fashioned gardens, have never allowed the pre-Re-

<sup>1</sup> *Historic Gardens of Virginia*, The James River Garden Club, pp. 185-234.

volutionary dawn to disappear. Chatham, Mount Airy, Stratford, Sabine Hall, Epping Forest, Wakefield—all known to Washington—still glory in their distinguished past. I found this colonial spirit present on the restored Wakefield Plantation—George Washington's Birthplace.<sup>1</sup>

Traveling in a family party one autumn afternoon, along the well-paved highway from Gloucester Point northward toward the Wakefield Plantation, many of the glories of American history suddenly burst upon me to inveigle me away from my mission. The site of the Indian village where Pocahontas had saved the life of the redoubtable John Smith must be visited; the old debtors' prison at Gloucester must be inspected; the story at Saluda of the birthplace of Mary Ball, mother of Washington, just across the Rappahannock river at Epping Forest, must be gathered; the Court House at Tappahannock, where the colonial Episcopal ministers were removed by the Crown for the heresy of preaching tax resistance by the colonies, was to consume more hours. I began to worry about the time.

"How far is it to Washington's birthplace?" I inquired of a young colored attendant at the oil station.

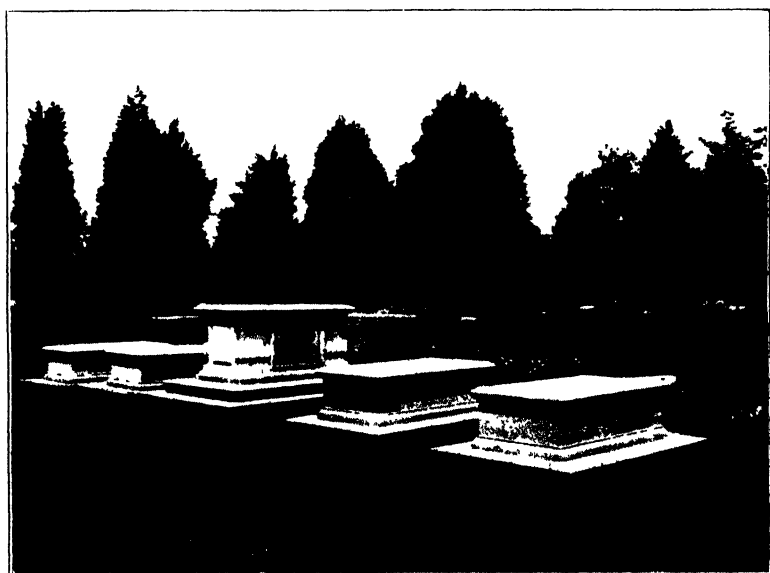
"It rambles on for about thirty miles, sir," he responded nonchalantly.

Nothing would stop me, I vowed, until I reached Wakefield. For nearly an hour I hurried along. Wakefield Plantation must be near, when at a sudden turn loomed a sign. Only two miles inland, it told me, was

<sup>1</sup>George Washington's Birthplace is now a national monument, under the supervision of the National Park Service, Department of Interior. The correct post-office address is Wakefield Plantation, Washington's Birthplace, Virginia. Much confusion has been caused by giving the post-office address of Wakefield. The latter post-office is one hundred forty miles from the birthplace.



WAKEFIELD, BIRTHPLACE OF WASHINGTON



WAKEFIELD CEMETERY



Stratford, the ancestral manor home of the Lees and the birthplace of Robert E. Lee, built in 1725.<sup>1</sup>

"Washington often visited there," I told my companions, consulting my watch. "We shall have time to see it and still have hours at the birthplace."

Back on the road again, five miles farther along, this roadside sign stopped us:

#### THE WASHINGTON HOME

JOHN WASHINGTON SETTLED AT WAKEFIELD IN 1665 AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON, FATHER OF GEORGE WASHINGTON, WAS BORN HERE IN 1694. GEORGE WASHINGTON WAS BORN HERE, FEBRUARY 22, 1732. IN 1734 WASHINGTON'S FATHER MOVED AWAY, BUT GEORGE WASHINGTON LIVED HERE AGAIN IN 1744-46 HERE AT WAKEFIELD ARE THE TOMBS OF THE EARLY WASHINGTONS.

A guide post informed us that the birthplace buildings lay inland two miles. For a way the road leads inward, like a long lane, until suddenly, upon our entering an avenue of cedars, the towering federal monument, which formerly marked the birth site, came into view at the far end.

The moment became indelible in my memory. There is more in this first glimpse than the magnitude and beauty of the surroundings; there is a symmetry and majesty of outline, a blending of trees and gardens, pathways and open spaces, in which the warmth of Nature's coloring invests the homestead with an unutterable charm.

"The original birthplace home, then owned by a nephew of General Washington, was destroyed by fire on Christmas day, 1780," explained Philip R. Hough, superintendent, who met me in the gardens close to the house. "The colonial mansion you are about to visit

<sup>1</sup> A full story of Stratford will be found in *Historic Gardens of Virginia*, Ibid, p. 185.

has been erected on the spot. The site was marked in 1815 by George Washington Custis, who had been adopted and raised from infancy by General and Mrs. Washington. Not until 1882 were their properties acquired by the Federal government. A fifty-foot granite shaft was erected by Congress in 1896 to replace the Custis-inscribed stone. When plans were made in 1930 for restoring the colonial mansion in which Washington was born, the shaft was moved to its present location at the entrance."

"Wasn't there a dispute as to whether this was the correct location?" I queried. "Didn't I read that some claimed the site to be near the southeast bank of Bridge's Creek where the Washington family graveyard is located?"

"You probably did," he responded, simultaneously handing me a document to fortify his statement, "but Dr. Charles O. Paullin, of the Division of Historical Research in the Carnegie Institute, after searching contemporaneous documents, proved that the Wakefield site actually was the birthplace of Washington,<sup>1</sup> so the mansion house was erected here."

"And is this an exact duplication of the house which burned?" I asked, as we walked from the rear of the building, which is near to the highway entrance, toward the front, which overlooks Pope's Creek.

"It is as nearly a duplicate as possible. Years of research failed to produce an original picture of the original house. But enough of the original foundation remained to indicate its size, orientation, and character. There were bricks, fireplace stones, and broken

<sup>1</sup> Paullin, Dr Charles O, "*That Century Dispute Over Washington's Birthplace*," Times-Dispatch, Richmond, Va, Sunday Magazine Section, February 18, 1934

dishes in the debris to show the materials from which the house had been built and the pattern of the dishes used. Then there was the tradition that the old Christian family home in Providence Forge, Virginia, still standing, was once referred to by a cousin as similar to the birthplace of Washington. From these and like bits of information the house was designed; the bricks in the new building were hand made and burned on the premises. The kitchen at the rear stands on the site of the ancient kitchen."

As the superintendent paused in his explanation, I looked up. Intent upon the flowers and shrubs on the ramble, I had not noticed until then that we had reached the lawn in front of the mansion. Before us spread a view that was really enchanting. Only a few rods away, sprawling out into a widespread of marshes, Pope's Creek joins the joyous Potomac in a six-mile expanse of still waters. What the manor was in former days one can readily imagine, for nothing has been changed as to the general disposition. Boats might still come through the watergate for their cargoes of tobacco, as they had in the past, if such boats and cargoes still persisted against the advance of other types of transportation. Indeed, it seemed that both water and land must live and feel, for there was an inexpressible peace upon the landscape.

"That's the first mocking bird I have heard this season," and the guide pointed to the soloist in a tall tree. Then he told how one hundred fifty species of birds frequent the plantation in summer time and that flocks of mourning doves make nightly roosting in the somber cedars.

"Come in and see this house," came the demand from



my wife, standing in the doorway. "This is the most attractive home I have ever seen. I wish we could have one like it."

To this home Augustine Washington brought Mary Ball, after their marriage on March 6, 1730. Twice was Augustine Washington married. First to Jane Butler, who died in 1729, leaving him three children—Augustine, Lawrence and June. The daughter June died in infancy. Whether the marriage occurred in England, where Mary Ball frequently visited, or in Virginia is not known. She was twenty; he was forty. She was plump and vivacious; he was tall and wiry, but the cares of a busy life were already stamped upon his walk and features.<sup>1</sup>

Within the house, elegantly improved and panelled, I was shown, under the light of amber glass, the Washington family Bible, from which I copied this extract:

"George Washington Son to Augustine & Mary his Wife was Born ye 11th Day of February 1731/2 about 10 in the Morning & was Baptiz'd on the 3:th of April following. Mr. Beverley Whiting & Capt. Christopher Brooks Godfathers and Mrs. Mildred Gregory Godmother."<sup>2</sup>

"In what church was Washington baptized?" I now asked, turning to the superintendent.

"Nobody knows for certain," he responded.

Then I learned that certain authorities believe he was christened in old Yeocomico church, while others

<sup>1</sup> Sawyer, Joseph Dillaway, *Washington*, Vol. I, pp. 58-60; Moore, Charles, *Wakefield, Birthplace of Washington*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Extract said to be in handwriting of Washington's mother. Birth was given as February 11 instead of February 22, and the year is written 1731/2, which refers to legal and popular years. Change in the old time calendar is responsible for this difference in time. For full discussion of calendar change, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, pp. 689-704.

put forward the claim of the Lower Church of Washington Parish.<sup>1</sup> Instead of naming her son after an uncle or grandfather, Mary, in gratitude to her guardian George Eskridge, named him after her benefactor.<sup>2</sup>

The original plantation where Washington was born was a mile wide and contained about one thousand acres. The present Government holdings are under four hundred acres. In colonial days thousands of pounds of tobacco were shipped overseas from this plantation. Now there are small raisings of tobacco and peanuts.

Out at the back of the mansion, neglected bushes and shrubs planted by the Washingtons again flourish. The veteran hackberry near the rear door is a sprout from a tree that burned down with the house in 1780. Several fig bushes have sprung up from their original root systems between the house and the garden. And the roses are gorgeous!

One mile east from the Birthplace, near the mouth of Bridge's Creek, is the Washington Family Burial Ground. It has been restored by the Government. A circle of cedars surrounds the place where rest thirty-one members of the family, including George's father, grandfather and great-grandfather—a family lineage of merchants and clergymen that reaches far back to Sulgrave Manor, in England.<sup>3</sup>

Now the postmistress had left the building and the

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, Marietta Minnigerode, *George Washington Country*, p. 129; Moore, Charles, *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Pryor, Mrs. Roger A, *The Mother of Washington and Her Times*, p. 75; Hughes, Rupert, *George Washington*, Vol I, p. 16. Following George, five other children were born of Augustine Washington's second marriage—Elizabeth (Betty), Samuel, Charles, John Augustine, and Mildred, who died in infancy. George outlived all of his own brothers and sisters and his two half-brothers.

<sup>3</sup> Sawyer, *Ibid*, Genealogy Table, Vol I, p. 4

caretaker was locking the doors for the night. I had lingered so long in the old fashioned garden, inspecting the century-old boxwood hedges, that darkness was already upon us.

"Where can we find accommodations for the night?" I asked the caretaker.

"Across the bay, operated under Government control," he answered, "is a log lodge with limited overnight lodging facilities. Maybe you could get in there."

Not until then did I realize how tired I was. For days I had been driving my car, and at night sleeping in noisy cities. I felt exhausted. To drive forty-five more miles to Fredericksburg seemed impossible.

"Is it quiet here?" I inquired of the hostess, after engaging rooms and while having dinner.

"I'll say it is quiet," came the cheery response.

That night I slept in the baby land of George Washington, listening to the song of frogs and the orchestra of the crickets before falling asleep. The morning sun rolling up over Pope's Creek awakened me.

It was one in a thousand peaceful nights; one in a thousand glorious mornings. Across the bay, bathed in light, its lawn jewelled with dew, outlined against a background of autumn colored trees and brooding cedars, stood the Birthplace.

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THE National Monument is open every day of the year free of charge to the public. It is reached from Washington, D. C., (89 miles) by following U. S. Highway No. 1 to Fredericksburg, Virginia, and thence on Virginia State Highway No. 3 known as the

"King's Highway"; or over the Maryland State Highways Nos. 5 and 3, approximately 45 miles to Morgantown, and then by ferry to Colonial Beach, Virginia. From this point it is 13 miles to Washington's Birthplace via Oak Grove. These alternate routes provide an interesting loop drive for an all-day trip from Washington.

From Richmond, Virginia, the shortest route is via State Highway No. 360 to Warsaw, where a left-hand turn is made into State Highway No. 3. From Yorktown one should follow U. S. Highway No. 17 to Tappahannock, where a right-hand turn will connect with Virginia State Highway No. 3 at Warsaw.

## CHAPTER II

### ON THE KING'S HIGHWAY

#### FERRY FARM

THAT part of Tidewater Virginia lying between the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, and known as the "Northern Neck," is the birthplace of many men who have distinguished themselves for statesmanship. It is a country over which kings and their subjects often quarrelled. It is within the crown grant of six million acres to Lord Culpeper, later inherited by the Virginia Fairfaxes. Once a land of velvet and gold lace—once a country of extensive slave-worked plantations,—it now lives quietly with its memories.

Many of those great manor houses, built by the earliest Virginia cavaliers, who once entertained as lavishly as the English country gentlemen, are now either acquired exclusive homes of the rich or are the restored plantation meccas for tourists. Only a few are inhabited by descendants. At every turn are plantations, byways and roads reflecting the light of an exalted civilization that has receded but will never be extinguished.

Dividing the "Northern Neck," like a backbone, is a road which passes through Warsaw northerly to Fredericksburg, traversing a fertile pastoral country. It is called the King's Highway, and proudly it wears

its title. Near it, on the Wakefield plantation, George Washington was born. Forty-five miles further on its way, just at the outskirts of Fredericksburg, is the Ferry Farm where he spent his boyhood. In the story of his life, this is the land of fable. Because he so often rode this way, I traveled slowly the route, anxious to find the landmarks he knew so well.

As you drive along, the feeling grows that this is a highway of historic significance. Five miles and Oak Grove is reached. It is small enough to be of interest. So we stop to look about. While living with his half-brother Augustine, at Wakefield, following the death of his father, George Washington attended school here from 1744 to 1746.

"That school house has been gone so long nobody knows where it was," a grey-bearded resident, resting before the store, told me.

Nearby is a marker on the site of the birthplace of James Monroe, and still farther another road sign informs us that six miles south, in the vicinity of Port Conway, is the old home and birthplace of James Madison.

"The old homes of three Presidents within twenty-five miles," someone in the backseat was saying, but I kept going, hoping to find still more of interest. And just as I saw the rooftops of historic Fredericksburg on the horizon, I found it blazoned on a State of Virginia marker on a cross-road to my left:

#### WASHINGTON'S BOYHOOD HOME

AT THIS PLACE, GEORGE WASHINGTON LIVED MOST OF THE TIME FROM 1739 TO 1747. HERE, ACCORDING TO TRADITION, HE CUT DOWN THE CHERRY TREE. WASHINGTON'S FATHER DIED HERE IN 1743; THE FARM WAS HIS SHARE OF THE PATERNAL ESTATE. HIS MOTHER LIVED HERE UNTIL 1771.

A roadway leads inward half a mile to the buildings which stand on the banks of the Rappahannock river. The day was radiant and my anticipations were high. I hoped to find the old farm buildings but was soon disappointed.

"In excavating for the present residence twenty-five years ago," said Mrs. J. B. Colbert, owner of the property, "workmen came across the foundation of the old Washington home, which had disappeared."

With one exception, all the buildings are gone, but the general appearance of the farm remains unchanged. Funds are now being raised to reclaim the old Washington homestead and turn it into a shrine.

It must have been a plantation of many buildings. Historical pamphlets distributed at the farm chronicle its story. According to the advertisement of sale, which appeared in April, 1738, in the Virginia Gazette, the farm contained two tracts, totaling two hundred and sixty acres, "lying about two miles below the Falls of the Rappahannock, close to the Riverside, with a handsome Dwelling House, three store houses, several other convenient Outhouses and a Ferry." Copies of old deeds on record in King George's County reveal that Augustine Washington purchased the property on November 3, 1738.

After leaving the Wakefield plantation in 1734, the family had lived for about four years at Epsewasson, renamed Mount Vernon at a later date, before making the Ferry Farm their home. Augustine Washington, the father, purchased Ferry Farm in order to be closer to his iron mines and enable him to give supervision to the Rappahannock shipping.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Homes of George Washington*, Bicentennial Commission, p. 13.



THE ONLY REMAINING BUILDING ON FERRY FARM





"That little shedlike structure attached to the two-story farm tenant house was used by George Washington as a workroom," Mrs. Colbert continued. "It was also used by him for convenience in making surveys, and is the only building which has been used constantly since his boyhood."

This lean-to surveying shed has changed much since George Washington worked beneath its roof. I walked within and sat down at the old table where they say he worked his problems of links and chains. Except for the old wall logs and fine stone chimney, there was nothing to inspire curiosity. Outside, a high catalpa tree shadows the building like a big umbrella.

Nevertheless I liked the old place. Here had come Parson Mason F. Weems, the pastor-story teller, to gather his fables for "A Life of George Washington" which has outsold all others among the biographies. The more historians expose the improbability of the cutting of the cherry tree; the more they show that incidents attributed to Washington by Weems happened to others, centuries before Washington's birth, the more Weems' biographies are sold.<sup>1</sup> He made Washington a cad; he pictured him as a snob. A century of investigations and truth-telling since then has scarcely penetrated the legendary fog which surrounds Washington's boyhood.

"They say the cherry trees on the farm are descendants of the one Washington cut," a farm attendant volunteered. I could not suppress a smile. But I did not have the heart to try to dispel the legend. The

<sup>1</sup> Weems, Mason, *A History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits of George Washington; Little Stories about George Washington*, (State Historical Museum, Madison, Wis., 1932).

tree now growing near the spot where the cherry tree is said to have stood when hatcheted is more than twenty feet high.

Strolling over the dooryard and along the river bank, I realized what fun the chubby youth must have had at this place. Young George was a leader in games. Jumping from one boat to another, moored in the stream awaiting cargoes; excelling in vaulting and running; playing soldier with other boys, and swimming in the river were all events in a summer.

"Here is the place where Washington pitched the Spanish dollar across the river," I was told. Measuring the distance with my eye, I marveled at the feat. To me it appeared the length of a football field.

Washington's mother was stern, and she required faithful school attendance. For a time the boy was tutored at Falmouth by "Master Hobby," the church sexton, said to be a convict pedagogue bought or "redeemed" by Washington's father.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards he crossed the Washington family ferry to Fredericksburg with his sister Betty. From this ferry the Farm takes its name. George went to Fredericksburg daily to attend the Marye School, taught by the Rector of St. George's Church, while she went to the Dames School to take lessons in English, French and "fine stitchery."

Across the dwindled river, over in Fredericksburg, residents point to the Baptist Church at the corner of Prince Charles and Matilda Streets as the site of the Marye School.

"There is where he was taught manners," the guide

<sup>1</sup> Fleming, Mrs. Vivian Minor, *Historic Periods of Fredericksburg, 1608-1861*, p. 14.

exclaimed, with a pointed reference to the influences of Fredericksburg on Washington's later life.

One book, "Rules of Civility," studied and copied by Washington when he was about thirteen years old, profoundly affected his future. Many of these rules, memorized and copied by him, are now to be found, in his own schoolboy handwriting, in the Congressional Library at Washington. Of the one hundred ten to be memorized, these are typical:

"Be not immodest in urging your friends to discover a secret."

"Sit not when others stand."

"Sleep not when others speak."

"Speak not doleful things in time of mirth."

"Talk not with meat in your mouth."

Just when all seemed well with the Washingtons and their growing young family, Augustine Washington was stricken. Eleven-year-old George was away visiting with relatives. He was sent for and returned before Augustine's death, which occurred at the Ferry Farm on April 12, 1743.<sup>1</sup> The cause was given as "gout of the stomach," a disease unknown, at least by such terminology, to present-day medical science.

By his will the large estate was divided into three parts. The Ferry Farm remained in possession of the widow and her children; the old Wakefield home went to Augustine; and the Hunting Creek, or Epsewasson Estate, went to Lawrence, the eldest son, who renamed it Mount Vernon in honor of Admiral Edward Vernon, with whom he served in the British Navy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fleming, Mrs. Vivian Minor, *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington, Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 103.

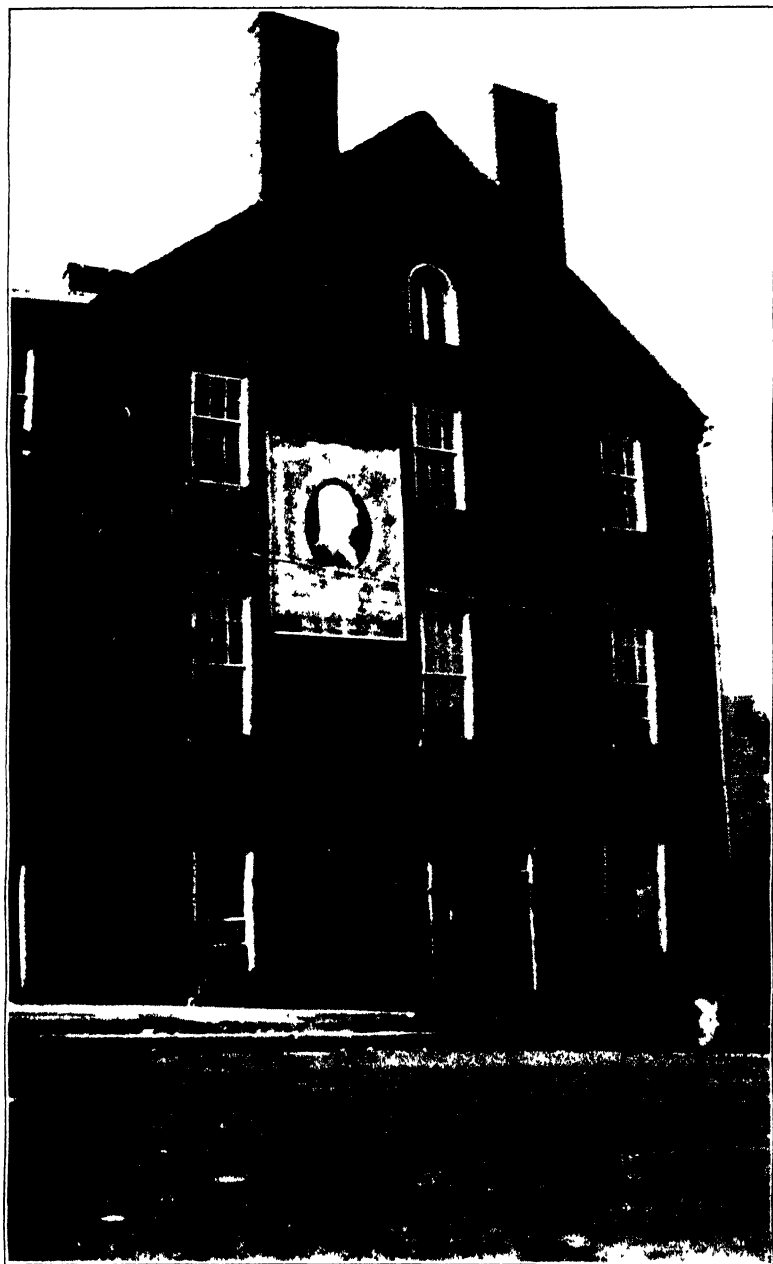
About a year later, George went to live with his half-brother Augustine at Wakefield. Then for nearly two years he was under the tutelage of a Mr. Williams,<sup>1</sup> at Oak Grove, who is generally reputed to have started George on his career as a surveyor. Young Washington soon knew his figures but he never possessed much imagination. When he returned to the Ferry Farm he had become a surveyor. And the profession of surveying he continued to practice even to the year of his retirement.

Tales of the sea fascinated George Washington. His brother had served in the British Navy. Admiring him, Washington also wanted to enter the King's service as a sailor. Although only fifteen years of age, he longed for adventure. One day when the sea-going vessels were anchored in the Rappahannock, not far from the Washington Ferry, the boy planned to enroll. Augustine had finally given his brotherly approval. Packing his trunk, he was ready to depart when his mother intervened. Backed by the advice of her brother, who had written some recommendation that she had better "apprentice him to a tinker," she thwarted his plans. Keenly disappointed, George agreed to give up the idea. His trunk was unpacked and the ship upon which he wished to embark sailed away.<sup>2</sup>

Washington's mother had won. As a reward for his obedience she presented George with a knife which he carried for many years and which is now carefully preserved in the Masonic Hall at Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>1</sup> Goolrick, Chester B., *George Washington's Boyhood Home*, pamphlet, p. 7

<sup>2</sup> Heusser, Albert H., *In the Footsteps of Washington*, p. 42.



MASONIC BUILDING AT FREDERICKSBURG



The story goes that during the Revolutionary War, Washington became so down-hearted at Valley Forge, because of lack of supplies and interference by members of Congress, that he was about to resign his commission. Learning of this, General Henry Knox sought an interview and reminded Washington of the story of the mother's presentation of the knife because of his obedience. It is said that the words of Knox caused Washington to reconsider and remain with his faithful soldiers.

Although, after he became a surveyor at sixteen, Washington spent much of his time away from home, he always returned to Ferry Farm. Occasionally he visited half-brothers either at Mount Vernon or Wakefield. While the Ferry Farm was the only actual home which Washington had until he lived at Mount Vernon, after he acquired it late in 1754, he was often absent for long periods of time. His mother remained on the farm until the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1771.

Doubt that Washington continued to make Ferry Farm his home after the death of his father in 1743 has recently been dispelled by the discovery of an old record in the Spotsylvania Court House. One day in 1751, Washington, then nineteen years old, took a swim in the Rappahannock, and the unusual court record under date of December 3rd in that year suggests what happened on that occasion:

"Ann Carroll and Mary McDaniel, of Friedericksburg, being committed to the gaol of this county by William Hunter, Gent, on suspicion of felony and charged with robbing the cloaths of Mr. George Washington when he was washing in the river some time



last summer, the court having heard several evidences are of the opinion that the said Ann Carroll be discharged, and admitted on evidence for our Lord the King against the said Mary McDaniel, and upon considering the whole evidence and the prisoners defense, the court are of the opinion that the said Mary McDaniel is guilty of petty larceny, whereupon the said Mary desired immediate punishment for the said crime and relied on the mercy of the court, therefore it is ordered that the sheriff carry her to the whipping post and inflict fifteen lashes on her bare back, and then she be discharged.”<sup>1</sup>

Washington had nothing to do with the prosecution. He had sailed in the September preceding to the Barbados with his dying brother, Lawrence.

Still claiming the Ferry Farm as his home, Washington, on November 4, 1752, before he was twenty-one, was initiated into the Fredericksburg Lodge of Masons. Three degrees were conferred upon him. On the side of the old brick lodge building in Fredericksburg is a mammoth billboard picture of Washington and a statement that he continued his membership in this lodge until his death.

Little as there is to see about the Ferry Farm, I enjoyed my visit there. When all was quiet, communion with the land, the trees, and the river seemed to convince me that many of the marvelous feats attributed to Washington in his boyhood were true. Lingered, I came to like the hush of repose that hung over the land, which awaited only the mirth of a Washington boyhood to quicken it again to lively scenes.

<sup>1</sup> Wilstach, Paul, *Tidewater Virginia*, p. 267.

All roads which lead to Fredericksburg go to the Ferry Farm. From Washington it can be reached on U. S. Route 1 (Jefferson-Davis Highway) to Fredericksburg. The same highway running north from Richmond serves travelers coming from the South. Highway 17 leads from Gloucester Point to Fredericksburg, and from the West, State Highway 3 goes to Fredericksburg.

## CHAPTER III

### SURVEYING HIS LORDSHIP'S MANOR

#### SHENANDOAH VALLEY

BILLOWING snow banks of apple blossoms in May, turned magically into blood-red ripe fruit by October, thrive in great orchards of the Shenandoah Valley lands which the youthful George Washington surveyed for Lord Thomas Fairfax. At either season the country is a land beautiful and bounteous.

At the northern gateway to the valley is Winchester, steeped in historic recollections. Washington used the city as a base for his surveying operations and later for military defenses during the Indian wars; Braddock stopped there on his ill-fated attempt to drive the French out of the Ohio Valley; Union and Confederate forces won and lost it seventy-two times in four years of war, and from it General Philip Sheridan began his stirring ride, turning to victory a routed and panic-stricken Union army so heroically that poetry has immortalized both valley and deed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "But there is a road from Winchester town,  
A good broad highway leading down;  
And there through the flush of the morning light  
A steed as black as the steed of night  
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight  
As if he knew the terrible need,  
He stretched away with his utmost speed;  
Hills rose and fell; but his heart was gay,  
With Sheridan fifteen miles away."

—Thomas Buchanan Reed.

When Washington first came there in 1748, the valley was a wilderness, with only an occasional "squatter" from Pennsylvania. Fate and friendship directed his course into this new land. During the years after the death of his father at Ferry Farm in 1743, he visited frequently his half-brother Lawrence at Mount Vernon. That same year the marriage of Lawrence to Ann, daughter of Sir William Fairfax of nearby Belvoir, one of the most influential families in the colony, brought a social contact that was to mean much to the youth.<sup>1</sup>

Soon the families of Mount Vernon and Belvoir were on such terms of intimacy that the visiting George came under the observation of Lord Thomas Fairfax, who made his home with his cousin and manager of his properties. Lord Fairfax was very much a cultured but eccentric English nobleman. Crossed in love, he decided to remain a bachelor. He left England in 1739 to inspect his American holdings and in 1742 took up his residence here. His extensive Virginia land-ownership<sup>2</sup> had come to him through his father's marriage with Catherine, daughter of Lord Culpeper. It included not only the "Northern Neck" of Virginia but also an immense domain in the Shenandoah Valley.

Disturbing reports that settlers were entering the northern gateway to the Shenandoah Valley and "squattling" on his lands caused Lord Fairfax to decide upon immediate action. George Washington had just learned surveying and sought employment. Although he was only sixteen at the time, his courage, loyalty and

<sup>1</sup> Lowther, Minnie Kendall, *Mount Vernon*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Heusser, Albert H., *In the Footsteps of Washington*, p. 44; Gordon, Armistead C., *In the Picturesque Shenandoah Valley*, p. 45.

powerful physique attracted the wealthy landowner. Out of their meetings at Belvoir a friendship arose which resulted in Washington's selection as one of a surveying party to start work with the melting of the snows in the spring of 1748.

Gathering early in the morning of Friday, March 11, at Belvoir,<sup>1</sup> in company with George Fairfax, brother of Lawrence Washington's wife, and their servants, they set out on horseback for the country beyond the Blue Ridge mountains, traveling forty miles the first day. The leader of the party, James Genn, joined them the second day. The expedition gave the young Virginian his first experiences in frontier life and a knowledge of the West in which he took an increasing interest.

With a copy of the diary which George Washington kept on that expedition, I followed him on the Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway westward over the mountains.<sup>2</sup> Stopping at Aldie I found that the tavern where he had rested had vanished long ago. Before proceeding, I decided to re-read his account. It turned out to be an amazing document, of greater interest than I had anticipated:

MARCH 15<sup>3</sup>

1748 (FRIDAY). "We set out early with Intent to Run round ye sd. Land but being taken in a Rain and it In-

<sup>1</sup> Belvoir, the home of William Fairfax, later owned by George William Fairfax, was on the west bank of the Potomac, below Mount Vernon, now the site of Fort Humphrey.

<sup>2</sup> The route which Washington took follows Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway 50 through Aldie and over the mountains by way of Ashley's Gap near Paris. For map showing location of Virginia Mountain "gaps" see Semple, Ellen C., *American History and its Geographical Conditions*, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup> George Washington Every Day, History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration, *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 366, et seq.; Fitzpatrick, John C., *George Washington, Colonial Traveler*, pp. 8-16.

creasing very fast obliged us to return it clearing about one oClock and our time being too Precious to Loose we a second time ventur's out and Worked hard till Night and then return'd to Penningtons we got our Supper and was lighted into a Room and I not being so good a Woodsman as ye rest of my Company striped myself very orderly and went in to ye Bed as they called it when to my Surprize I found it to be nothing but a Little Straw-Matted together without Sheets or any thing else but only one thread Bear blanket with double its Weight of Vermin such as Lice Fleas &c I was glad to get up (as soon as y. Light was carried from us) I put on my Cloths and Lay as my Companions. Had we not been very tired I am sure we should not have slep'd much that night I made a Promise not to Sleep so from that time forward chusing rather to sleep in y. open Air before a fire as will appear hereafter."—Diary.

## MARCH 16

1748 (SATURDAY). "We set out early and finish'd about one oClock and then Travell'd up to Frederick Town (Later Renamed Winchester) where our Baggage came to us we cleaned ourselves (to get Rid of y. Game we had catched y. Night before) and took a Review of y. Town and thence return'd to our Lodgings where we had a good Dinner prepar'd for us Wine and Rum Punch in Plenty and a good Feather Bed with clean Sheets which was a very agreeable regale."—Diary.

## MARCH 23

1748 (SATURDAY). CRESAP'S (OLD TOWN), Md. "Rain'd till about two oClock and Clear'd when we were agreeably surpris'd at y. sight of thirty odd Indians coming from War with only one Scalp We had some Liquor with us of which we gave them Part it elevating there Spirits put them in y. Humour of

Dauncing of whom we had a War Daunce there manner of Dauncing is as follows Viz They clear a Large Circle and make a Great Fire in y. middle then seats themselves around it y. Speaker makes a grand speech telling them in what Manner they are to Daunce after he has finished y. best Dauncer jumps up as one awaked out of a Sleep and runs and Jumps about y. Ring in a most comical Manner he is followed by y. Rest then begins there Musicians to Play ye. Musick is a Pot half (full) of Water with a Deerskin Stretched over it as tight as it can and a goard with some Shott in it to Rattle and a Piece of an horses Tail tied to it to make it look fine y. one keeps Rattling and y. other Drumming all y. while y. others is Dauncing.”—Diary.

## MARCH 26

1748 (TUESDAY). “Travelld up ye Creek to Solomon Hedges Esqr one of his Majestys Justices of ye Peace for ye County of Frederick where we camped when we came to Supper there was neither a Cloth upon ye. Table nor a knife to eat with but as good luck would have it we had knives of (our) own.”—Diary.

## APRIL 4

1748 (THURSDAY). SOUTH BRANCH OF THE POTOMAC RIVER. “. . . we did two Lots and was attended by a great Company of People Men Women and Children that attended us through ye. Woods as we went showing there Antick tricks I really think they seemed to be as Ignorant a Set of People as the Indians they would never speak English but when spoken to they speak all Dutch.”—Diary.

## APRIL 13

1748 (SATURDAY). MOUNT VERNON. “Mr. Fairfax got safe home and I myself safe to my Brothers which concludes my journal.”—Diary.

(This was the end of the surveying trip. His "Brothers" was Lawrence Washington's Mount Vernon Estate where at that time George evidently made his home.)

Coming down the picturesque, meandering road over the mountains into the well-tilled Shenandoah Valley, with the fresh pictures conjured by Washington's experiences, I found it difficult to realize that this once was "Fairfax land." The first Washington surveys, followed by still others made by him in the next two years, covered the "region where today the twisted contours of Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland seem to dovetail."<sup>1</sup> They extended as far north as Frederick, Maryland, south for many miles along the "South Fork" of the Potomac,<sup>2</sup> and were more detailed in the vicinity of "Greenway Court." The Fairfax boundary extended down the dome-sentined valley as far south as New Market.

All of the grilling experiences of that first expedition to the wilderness were repeated many times in the next two years. Now confident of his lordship over the disputed lands, Lord Fairfax in 1748, upon Washington's suggestions, laid out an estate in the valley and moved here to spend the remainder of his life. He occupied much of his time riding his acres by day, and devoted his evenings to his cups, books, and art treasures. After his death, a controversy arose over his titles which was finally compromised by the Virginia legislature.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Heusser, Albert H., *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Showalter, William Joseph, *The Travels of George Washington*, National Geographic Magazine, January, 1932, pp. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Beveridge, Albert J., *John Marshall*, Vol. II, pp. 206-213.



Rambling along the highway, I suddenly found myself in a little village with a large white post erected at the road juncture. A polished brass tablet on its face attracted my attention and I halted to read:

#### WHITE POST

THIS POST WAS ORIGINALLY PLACED HERE BY LORD FAIRFAX TO DIRECT STRANGERS TO HIS HOME GREENWAY COURT ABOUT ONE AND A HALF MILES FROM HERE AND TO POINT THE WAY TO WINCHESTER. TRADITION SAYS GEORGE WASHINGTON ERECTED THE FIRST POST, 1751.

"Greenway Court" is now more scattered than when its owner died in 1782. An ardent loyalist during the Revolutionary War, Washington allowed his benefactor to remain undisturbed during the conflict. Many of the buildings have been replaced. Great trees which shaded Washington on his frequent visits still stand like monarchs along the highway. The long even fences of stones were never disturbed. One small stone "shanty," which Washington used for an office building, has been preserved. I peered through the windows with reflective interest. It all seems insignificant for the moment until the eyes are lifted in a glance of the surrounding valley. The sweep of the tillable landscape is sublime.

Eleven miles to the west is Winchester. At the corner of one of its busiest streets I found the well-preserved "Washington Headquarters," used for making his surveys and later in planning the defense of the valley. The old building, built partly of wood and partly of stone, is the outstanding landmark of the Shenandoah Valley. A tablet on its street side tells its long history, and then adds:



OLD SURVEYING HOUSE AT GREENWAY COURT



WASHINGTON'S SURVEYING HEADQUARTERS AT WINCHESTER



WHILE IN THE SERVICE OF LORD FAIRFAX THIS BUILDING WAS FROM TIME TO TIME USED BY WASHINGTON AS A SURVEYING OFFICE.

Only two blocks away in the basement of Christ Church Episcopal is the vault of Lord Fairfax. A light burns daily over his red-bricked sarcophagus. I paused to read the record of his life, blazoned in bronze on the side walls of the charnel house, and then knelt a moment to thank the Creator for the friendly hand this dead had given to Washington. Unknowingly, he had placed one of the first stepping stones to the building of a great Republic.

Public recognition of Washington's earliest services as a surveyor came quickly. In pioneer days the law and surveying were chosen professions, followed by the better educated and the more wealthy. Although able to pursue surveying but a few years, Washington received deserved recognition for the accuracy of his work. In July, 1749, he received his surveyor's commission from William and Mary College, Williamsburg, and was at once selected as public surveyor for Culpeper County.

Meantime the health of Lawrence, his half-brother, having become impaired,<sup>1</sup> a trip to the warmer climate of the Barbados was deemed necessary. For the two years past, George spent much of his leisure time at Lawrence's Mount Vernon home. The two were deeply attached. George determined to accompany his ailing brother on the health-seeking journey. Together they sailed on September 28, 1751.

One of the places pointed out to travelers in Bar-

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence suffered from a chronic ailment diagnosed by his physician as "lung trouble," or probably tuberculosis.

bados is the home where George Washington stayed on the island. It is now the home of a police magistrate.<sup>1</sup> This was the only occasion that the first president of the United States left the continent. While there George contracted smallpox, which left his face disfigured for the rest of his life. Foreseeing little hope for his brother's recovery, he returned to Mount Vernon early the following March, bearing messages for Lawrence's wife. She planned to visit her husband, but he unexpectedly returned home, so emaciated in body and racked by disease that death followed on July 26, 1752. By the terms of his will George became the future heir to Mount Vernon.

Hardships endured in three years of life on the frontier had prepared Washington for the great tasks he must now shoulder. Tall in stature, and strong of body, he was at the threshold of his majority. Contacts with the more wealthy of society, experiences in assisting his mother and half-brother in the management of their extensive landed estates, the harsh trials of a pioneer in the wilderness had wrought in him a virile fiber. He was prepared. Destiny beckoned him to enter the difficult service of founding a new nation.

<sup>1</sup> No. H.h.116/1932/888.

Colonial Secretary's Office  
BARBADOS.  
17th May, 1932.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 24th February last, respecting your desire to obtain a picture and description of the house in Barbados at which George Washington resided while on a visit to the Colony, I have the honour to forward a photograph of the house which is situated at the corner of Bay Street and Chelsea Road, and is at present occupied by Mr. E. R. L. Ward, B. A., a Police Magistrate. Should you desire further information I would suggest that you communicate direct with Mr. Ward.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

CYRIL E. SHOUTE,  
For Colonial Secretary.

The Shenandoah Valley is reached east or west by U. S. Route 50 (Lee-Jackson Memorial Highway), from the West Virginia line to Alexandria. North and South U. S. Route 11 traverses the valley. Part of this route is known as the Valley Turnpike and extends from Winchester to Lexington, a distance of 128 miles. It traverses the far-famed valley of the Shenandoah and is a favored thoroughfare for the tourist.

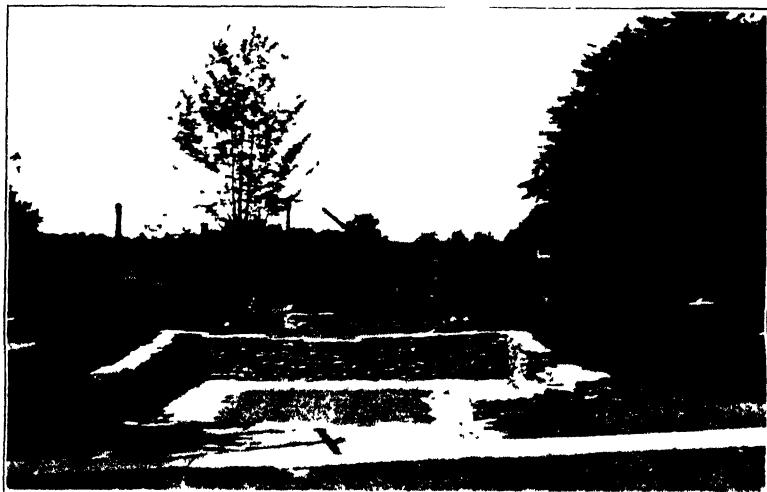
## CHAPTER IV

### INLAND DOMAINS OF A KING

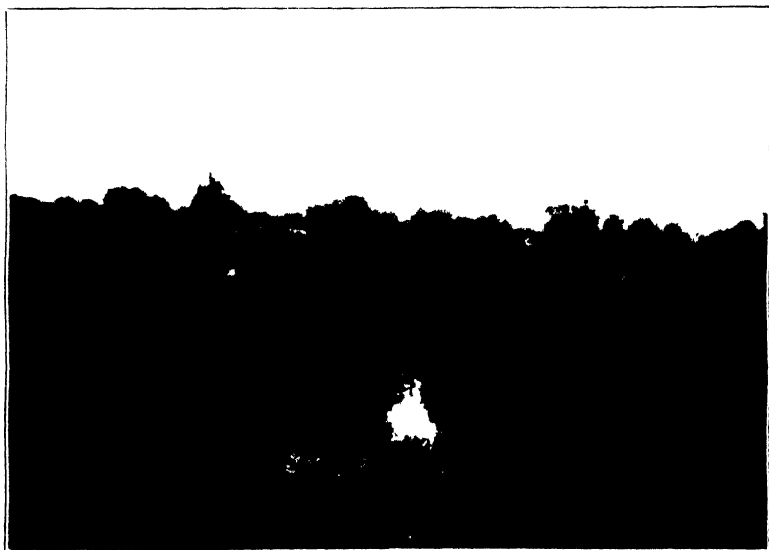
#### SHORES OF LAKE ERIE

UNDER the protection of a weather-scarred, three-century-old hemlock, overlooking French Creek and Waterford to the north, I obtained my first view of the site of historic Fort Le Boeuf. From this exact spot it was that George Washington, on his diplomatic mission to warn the French out of the Ohio Valley, December 11, 1753, had sighted the primitive fortification on the opposite hilltops. He came riding there on horseback through slush and snow. All Nature had bowed submissively to the onrush of winter. I arrived in the colorful days of October in a pelting rain which drenched the fertile land. As I came under the old tree, the rains subsided and the sun flushed the valley. Through the light on the trees, flashing gold and rose, the little village of rain-washed, vari-colored houses took on an air of quaint attractiveness.

That visit to the northwest corner of Pennsylvania was followed by a series of events that made possible an American union. At the middle of the century France was feebly entrenched on the water-routes from Quebec down the Mississippi Valley to New Orleans. The English-speaking colonies, divergent in views and



SITE OF OLD FORT LE BOEUF



BANKS OF FRENCH CREEK





policies, held the Seaboard. That great area west of the Alleghenies and south of the Great Lakes was the ground of dispute. There were no recognized national boundaries. Even the blundering English ministry saw that the nation which controlled the empire wilderness of the West soon would be supreme in colonial possessions. For years both nations claimed it by right of exploration, Indian treaties, and settlement. Both realized, however, that the Government which occupied the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers—"the forks of the Ohio"—would hold the key.

France was the first to act. During the summer of 1753, soldiers built a stockade at Fort Le Boeuf, at the end of the Indian portage, between Fort Presq' Isle on Lake Erie and French Creek, fifteen miles south of the present Erie. That year it was planned also to erect still another fort one hundred and twenty miles to the south at the forks of the Ohio, near where the golden triangle of Pittsburgh now stands. Sickness in camp prevented. During the late fall, the English trading post at Venango, now on the site of the present city of Franklin, was seized. In early November it was occupied by a detachment from Fort Le Boeuf. As winter set in the French were virtually in control of the western wilderness.

Of all the colonies, Virginia was the only one to be aroused. England advanced a settlement plan for halting the threatened military invasion. As early as 1749 the British King chartered the Ohio Company for the purpose of fur trading and colonizing west of the mountains. Half a million acres of western lands were granted. The Company selected as its pathfinder that intrepid hunter, Christopher Gist, who spent the next

summer exploring "good level lands" now in the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

While he was absent, the Company erected a trading post at Wills Creek (now Cumberland, Maryland), and, by the aid of an Indian named Nemacolin, blazed a trail over Laurel Hills to Redstone Creek (now Brownsville, Pennsylvania). This trace, followed by Washington on his diplomatic mission of 1753, was later used in part for the building of those other famous roads over the Alleghenies, including "Washington's Road," "Braddock's Road," and the "Cumberland Pike," now a splendid scenic national highway over the mountains. To gain the West, the Seaboard colonies must build and depend on roads—a difficult and expensive undertaking. The French had the easy access of rivers and lakes from Quebec.

Learning of the aggressions of the French during the summer of 1753, Governor Robert Dinwiddie dispatched Captain William Trent to warn the invaders to depart. Trent diffidently returned the soiled message undelivered. Loss of time and failure to obtain results disturbed the irascible Scotch Executive. He went out looking for a man who would act. After consulting with his old friends the Fairfaxes, he turned to Major George Washington, who one year previous was appointed as district adjutant-general of the Virginia militia with the rank of major, at a salary of one hundred fifty pounds a year. In the young Virginian, just turned twenty-one, he found his "do it now" man. He summoned him to Williamsburg.

<sup>1</sup> Orrill, Lawrence A., *Christopher Gist and His Sons, Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. XV, No. 3, August, 1932, pp. 191-194; Thwaites, Reuben Gold, *France in America, The American Nation: A History*, p. 153.

Historians have spent much time in surmising why Washington should accept this mission. Some claim it appealed to his "vanity." Others contend that he responded because of the "adventure." Whatever it was, the Governor obtained prompt action. Washington was ready to go after one day's notice.

On October 31, 1753, after a conference with the Executive, a message was placed in Washington's hands for delivery to Leguardier de St. Pierre, the French commander, which read in part as follows:

"Sir:

"The lands upon the river Ohio in the western parts of the colony of Virginia are so notoriously known to be the property of the Crown of Great Britain, that it is a matter of equal concern and surprise for me to hear that a body of French forces are erecting fortresses and making settlements upon that river within His Majesty's dominions. . . .

"The bearer hereof, George Washington, Esq., one of the adjutant-generals, is sent to complain to you of the encroachments thus made. . . ."

Engaging Jacob Vanbraam, his old Dutch fencing master at Fredericksburg, as his French interpreter,<sup>1</sup> he proceeded without delay to Alexandria where he obtained supplies. Proudly he rode away. Erect of figure, as dignified on horseback as an Indian, over six feet tall and weighing under one hundred seventy pounds, he was a fine specimen of young Virginia manhood.<sup>2</sup>

Following his old surveying trail over the mountains by way of Ashby's Gap, he stopped at Winchester at the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley for

<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick, John C., *George Washington, Colonial Traveler, 1732-1775*, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, Paul Leicester, *George Washington*, p. 38.

horses and equipment. Then he pushed on to Wills Creek, whence two notations were made in his diary:<sup>1</sup>

NOVEMBER 14, Wednesday. Wills Creek, (Cumberland), Maryland.

"We pursued the new road to Wills Creek, where we arrived on the 14th of November. Here I engaged Mr. Gist to pilot us and also hired four others as Servitors, Barnaby Currin, and John M'Quire, Indian traders; Henry Steward and William Jenkins."

NOVEMBER 15, Thursday. Leaves Wills Creek.

"In company with those persons left the Inhabitants the Day following The excessive Rains and vast Quantity of Snow which had fallen, prevented our reaching Mr. Frazier's an Indian Trader, at the Mouth of Turtle Creek, on Monongahela, till Thursday, the 22d."

The fury of winter had already hit the mountains. Chilly rains, which turned to drifting snow, blocked the passageways. A white, trackless wilderness spread away in every direction. The trees had lost their leaves. The country was soft and slippery under foot; the landscape was gray and drear. The heavy laden horses made slow advance.

Upon reaching the Monongahela, the baggage was sent down in canoes to the forks of the Ohio. There Washington had to await its arrival. Where the great steel metropolis of Pittsburgh now reddens the skies with furnaces, impishly spitting smoke and fire like the angry mouths of infernal dragons, were only desolate valleys and snow-clad, towering hills. No dream of the El Dorado which was to be discovered in coal and steel under his feet awakened him. Away to the West

<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick, John C., *Ibid*, p. 43.

was the vast wilderness domain claimed by the kings of two powerful nations across the seas.

Today, modern highways follow the footprints of Washington's horses. To hit the old trail and go with him to his destination at Fort Le Boeuf in a week-end vacation is to spend hours in delight and reverie. If you go, think only of the past. It will add to the romantic interest. As you proceed, search out the old landmarks. Their traditions will lend charm. Follow on, and soon the ghostly leaders of the other day will return to guide the way.

Across the dark waters of the Allegheny river, over the wooded hills north of Pittsburgh, I followed the road for a short distance out of Ambridge where the Indian village of Logtown was found. Washington went there seeking the support of Half-King and other chiefs for his mission. The Long House where the young Virginian sat in solemn conclave with his Indian hosts has vanished. Even the site of the village has been unknown for a century until definitely re-located in 1932 on the flats at Legionville by the National Geographic Society.<sup>1</sup> Nearly fifty years after Washington's visit, "Mad Anthony" Wayne made headquarters on this very spot in his campaign to exterminate the Indians from Pennsylvania. He named it Legionville. There is neither tepee nor council fire to conjure the departed braves to return.

After five days of feasting and pow-wows, in which Washington chafed at the delays, his party set out, ac-

<sup>1</sup> *National Geographic Magazine*, January, 1932, p. 12; Holbrook, Franklin F., *The Historical Tour of 1932*, Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine for November, 1932, Vol. XV, No. 4, p. 311; *Nearby Places of Historic Interest*, Gulf Refining Company, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1932, p. 31; Preston, John Hyde, *A Gentleman Rebel, Mad Anthony Wayne*, p. 287.

accompanied by Half-King, White Thunder, and two Indian game hunters. It was the last day of November, 1753. From Beaver, their road cut northeast through Harmony to Butler and then on to Franklin, where they found the French officer Joincaire<sup>1</sup> in charge of Fort Machault.

"The French got Washington's Indians so drunk here it took days before he could get them sobered and started again," a resident, who had written a little historical pamphlet on Franklin, told me.

Standing around the granite marker on the site of Fort Machault, near the juncture of French Creek and the Allegheny river, my willing informant called up the troubles which beset Washington. The French had scolded the Indians for their friendship for the British, then gave presents to entice them away. Almost in despair Washington made a last effort. It was noon on December 7 before the hilarious attendants could be torn away.

From then on to Fort Le Boeuf the Washington trail and the highway follow closely the course of French Creek. There are water scenes as attractive as the Avon. There are nestling homesteads as inviting as on the Swiss hillsides. Every fall Pittsburghers come here on hunting expeditions. Game is almost as plentiful as when Washington traveled this way. It is a country of rich farms, hillsides of wood, and meadows of green.

"We passed over much good land since we left Venango, and through several extensive and very rich meadows, one of which was near four miles in length and considerably wide in some places," wrote Wash-

<sup>1</sup> Holmes, M. D., *George Washington, The Soul of a Nation*, p. 30.

ington in his diary.<sup>1</sup> He dreamed of the future possibilities of agriculture.

After four days of weary travel through storm and mire Fort Le Boeuf was sighted. Officers from the fort went out to greet them. Cold and wet from riding through snows and under dripping trees, they entered at the gate. Warm fires and comfortable lodgings awaited them. On the morning following, with the aid of an interpreter, Washington presented his message to the white-haired Saint Pierre.

Gone is the old fort where Washington waited two days for a reply. Instead, his monument, in the dress of a Virginia major, stands in the public street of Waterford in front of the former gateway to the stockade grounds. And the children in the public schools are taught that "Waterford is as sacred in national and international history as any spot in the world. It is a pivotal point in human history. The fate of France was decided in Waterford in December, 1753."

Even after the reply was presented, Washington had difficulties. The drunken Indians delayed from day to day. On December 16 the return trip by canoes on French Creek started.

"Many times all hands were obliged to get out and remain in the water half an hour or more, getting over the shoals," Washington's diary reveals. At Venango the horses were met but soon abandoned because of the deep snow. Washington and Gist struck out through the forest of snow, accompanied only by an Indian guide.

<sup>1</sup> *George Washington's Writings*, Vol. I, p. 29 (edited by Worthington C. Ford); Reynolds, John E., *The Venango Trail*, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. XVI, No. 1, p. 17; Parkman, Francis, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, Vol. I, p. 137.



Near Evans City is a tablet on the grounds where the Indian fired at Washington from ambush and missed. Entering Pittsburgh, where the Washington Bridge now crosses, the young leader fell into the Allegheny and spent a fireless night on an island that has since disappeared. As rapidly as possible he re-crossed the silent, white-robed mountains.

Stopping with the Fairfaxes at Belvoir for a "day of rest" he then hurried on to Williamsburg, and on January 16, 1754, presented the Governor with the reply:

"Sir:

"As I have the honor of commanding here in chief, Mr. Washington delivered me the letter which you wrote to the commander of the French troops. . . .

"I shall transmit your letter to Marquis Duquesne. His answer will be a law to me. . . . As to the summons you send me to retire, I do not think myself obliged to obey. . . .

"I made it my particular care to receive Mr. Washington with a distinction suitable to your dignity as well as his own quality and great merit. . . .

"I do myself the profound respect with which I am, Sir,

"Your most humble and most obedient servant,  
"Leguardier de St. Pierre."

The answer astounded the Governor. He re-read it several times and then directed Major Washington to prepare a report of his journey which could be presented to the legislature on the morning. As the news of his return spread, Washington became the colonial Lindbergh of his generation. He had ridden five hundred miles into the wilderness—a hazardous feat in those days—and was back with a message that confirmed the worst fears of colonial leaders.

"No literary production of a youth of twenty-one ever electrified the world as did the publication of the Journal of this dauntless envoy of the Virginian governor," wrote Archer Butler Hulbert, in appraising his spontaneous popularity.<sup>1</sup> "No young man more instantly sprang into the notice of the world than George Washington. The journal was copied far and wide in the newspapers of the other colonies. It sped across the sea, and was printed in London by the British government. In a manly, artless way it told the exact situation on the Ohio frontier and announced the first positive proof the world had had of hostile French aggression into the great river valley of the West. Despite certain youthful expressions, the prudence, tact, capacity, and modesty of the author were recognized by a nation and by a world."

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Waterford, Pennsylvania, the site of old Fort Le Boeuf which marks the farthest point northwest visited by George Washington, is fifteen miles south of Erie and one hundred twenty miles north of Pittsburgh. Highway 6 from Erie leads south to Waterford. Highways 19, 8, 322, and 6 from Pittsburgh northward follow closely the Washington path to Waterford.

<sup>1</sup> From "*Washington's Road, Historic Highways*," Vol. III, p. 120.

## CHAPTER V

### WESTWARD THE WAY OF EMPIRE

#### BRADDOCK'S TRAIL

THAT stretch of the old National Road between Cumberland, Maryland, and Uniontown, Pennsylvania—a distance of sixty wandering miles—witnessed many of the bravest deeds of George Washington as a colonial officer. On this wilderness drill ground, Nature schooled him in the matchless leadership which brought victory in the Revolutionary War thirty years later.<sup>1</sup>

Even the country itself has an appearance of a certain nobility lent by the far-off tree shade on the ascending foothills and by the aloofness of the distant, dome-shaped mountain tops. Along what is now a modern highway over the mountains, Washington fought the Battle of Fort Mifflin, called "the first blow which led to the American Revolution." Within its bordering green meadows and dark forest-aisles were fired the shots that opened both the French and Indian War and the Seven Years War in Europe, ending in a bold revision of the maps of three continents.

<sup>1</sup> Other Revolutionary War leaders who were with Washington in Braddock's campaign were. Horatio Gates, who received the surrender of British General Burgoyne at Saratoga; Daniel Morgan, who defeated Tarleton at Cowpens, Hugh Mercer, hero of the Battle of Princeton; and General Thomas Sumter, the "game cock" who so annoyed Cornwallis in South Carolina. See "*Fort Mifflin and Historic Shrines of the Redstone Country*," Washington Bicentennial Issue, pp 72-73.

With peace came the exodus of treading thousands, silently making their way over this worn military road and mountain passageways to settle the reclaimed West.<sup>1</sup> Tales of the heroism and the pageantry of both struggle and movement invest the countryside with a setting for fascinating reveries. George Washington is the motivating hero on horseback everywhere in this colonial background.

Before leaving the National Capital for Cumberland to begin my pilgrimage, I obtained a map from the National Geographic Society and an atlas issued by the Federal Government showing the routes of all of Washington's travels. A brief consultation disclosed that in all four major advances to reclaim the West for the Seaboard settlements from 1754 to 1758, Washington was a leader. From my note book I find I made these memoranda in summarization:

- (1) Colonial campaign in the spring of 1754, which passed along or near the present National Highway west from Cumberland, Maryland, to Fort Necessity.
- (2) Campaign of the British Government troops under direct command of General Edward Braddock, aided by Washington, in the spring and summer of 1755. For part of the way the troops moved along the same route as the Washington colonial campaign a year previous. From Fort Necessity the march veered northwestward to within eight miles of the present site of Pittsburgh.
- (3) After the defeat of Braddock, the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania were left to the ravages of the Indians. Under Washington's direction a series of frontier forts was hastily constructed to stem Indian attacks.

- (4) Campaign of General Forbes in 1758. The route of advances follows closely the present Lincoln Highway west of Bedford, Pennsylvania. On November 25, Fort Duquesne at the forks of the Ohio was found abandoned and Washington marched in and waved the British flag above the ruins. By the Treaty of Peace in 1763, France ceded Canada and all possessions east of the Mississippi river to England.

"The one indispensable man in all these campaigns was Washington," I told my companions, when, before starting out, I read this outline of his frontier activities. "Everywhere in ravine and mountain we shall find his trail. Nature can never obliterate the landmarks he left."

And we easily found them!

In a little park in Cumberland, Maryland, reconstructed from what is believed to be most of the original log material, is the cabin used by George Washington as his headquarters during part of the French and Indian War. It stands at the east end of the land of dispute. At the other stands a little stone fort, at the forks of the Ohio in Pittsburgh, nearly two hundred miles away. There is scarcely an intervening valley or hilltop which Washington did not visit in protecting the frontier from French and Indian raids.

Almost as humble as the shelter of a tree is this Cumberland center from which Washington issued his orders and discussed his campaigns. The building seems too small for a mountaineer's cabin. It has deep inset windows and great hinges on the door strong enough to swing a much heavier burden. Near the en-

trance a seven-line bronze tablet gives this brief record:

HEADQUARTERS OF  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
A COLONEL UNDER GENERAL BRADDOCK  
AT FORT CUMBERLAND DURING THE FRENCH  
AND INDIAN WAR, 1755-1758, AND AS  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
OF THE AMERICAN ARMY IN 1794.

Within is a room so small that not more than three could consult the maps at any time. The ceiling is low. A dim light filters through the narrow openings. Dead embers clutter the fireplace. If the mellowing wood of its walls could speak our language, there would be plans for campaigns rehearsed and stories of pioneer heroism related that would have long held the interest of General John J. Pershing when, after his day of victory, he came here to pay homage.

Buildings and places mark the starting points of events. Men are the actors. The foresight of the stubborn Governor Dinwiddie, down in Williamsburg, saved the West before it was too late. He stormed at the inactive legislature. He scolded the other colonies for their delays in responding. He did the ordering but left the fighting to others.

Even before the return of Washington from his diplomatic mission to the French in January, 1754, Governor Dinwiddie begged the House of Burgesses for supplies and revenues. After long bickering it responded grudgingly. Using private funds, the Governor, without waiting, dispatched a party of fifty men under Captain William Trent to build a log fort at the forks of the Ohio. Interest rose. Washington's report of the refusal of the French to retire heightened

official excitement. The Governor and his court grew indignant. They fumed at the Burgesses for failure to vote taxes. Most of the common people, however, remained morose or indifferent. If there were to be a war the King should pay for the fighting—if they had to do it.

Washington shared in both the excitement and the indignation. He was ready to go anywhere—do anything. With the promise of lands for service, two companies of one hundred fifty men were assembled at Alexandria and George Washington, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, set off with them on April 2, 1754. Horses were to be purchased at Winchester. When the soldiers arrived there, it was Spring and the farmers would not give them up, insisting they needed them in putting in crops. Washington had to move on to Cumberland, dragging only meager supplies.

Every mile the route became worse. Rains fell. The troops wallowed through ruck and mire. Then more rain. The earth dripped; the land oozed slush. Upon the arrival of the troops at Cumberland on April 20, they met Captain Trent. He was on his way for supplies. He had left fifty men building the fort at the Ohio in command of Ensign Ward. He now planned to return with Washington. While both waited for supplies, the fifty men Trent had left on the Ohio came trooping in. They had been surprised by the French who swarmed in great numbers about their partly built fort. They were given one hour to surrender.<sup>1</sup>

"I managed to persuade Captain Contrecoeur to let us go and take our tools with us, but that was all," Ensign Ward reported.

<sup>1</sup> Powell, Lyman, *Historic Towns of the Middle States*, p. 393.

Action of the French in seizing the fort was an open act of war. Although he had less than two hundred men, Washington decided to move forward. Sixty men were sent ahead to widen the Nemacolin path over Savage mountain. Washington wrote to the Governor for cannon and supplies. Then he proceeded.

Soon Indians arrived, telling stories of French spies scouting in the wilderness. The construction of the road went on slowly. Often the rivers could not be forded. Washington was forced to erect a bridge over the Youghiogeny, after risking his life in a canoe seeking a ford. Late in May he had almost reached the Great Meadow, where he planned to refresh his horses with grass. As he pushed on, word came from the Half-King, one of the Indian allies, that the French had been on their eastward march two days.

Hastily surveying the outlines of the country, Washington selected the center of Great Meadows for a defense. Brush was cleared away, rude entrenchments were made, and a wooden picket-fence stockade, about one hundred feet square, was erected. Days passed. With no immediate attack the men became nervous. One night six deserted. Two days later Christopher Gist came with a report that a small body of French were encamped six miles away at the eastern foot of Laurel Hill.

Washington decided on an immediate attack. Under the cover of darkness, a favorite ruse to be used by him in later campaigns, he led forty men out to join their Indian ally. By the aid of footprints discovered by Half-King, two scouts led Washington to a little hollow surrounded by rocks and trees. The colonial troops came up on one side; Indians on the others.



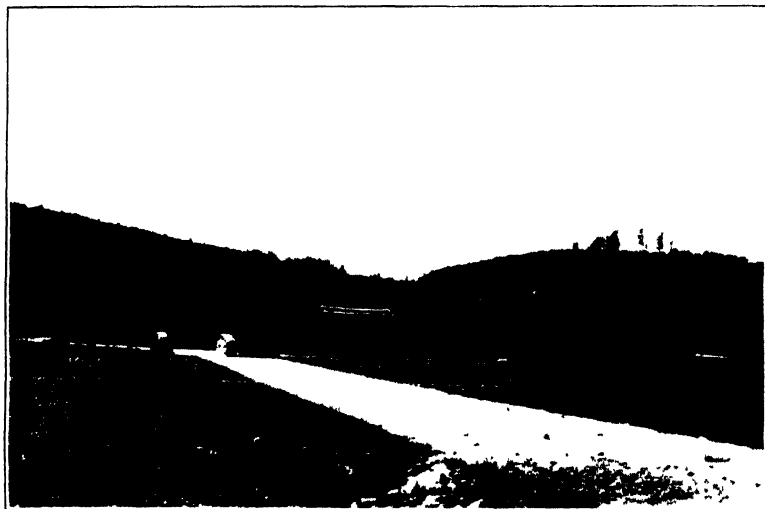
There on May 28, 1754, took place Washington's first battle. It lasted five minutes. The French leader Jumonville was killed with ten of his guard. Twenty-two were captured. The others fled. Jumonville was buried where he fell.

"I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound," braggingly wrote this soldier of twenty-two to his brother Augustine a few days later.

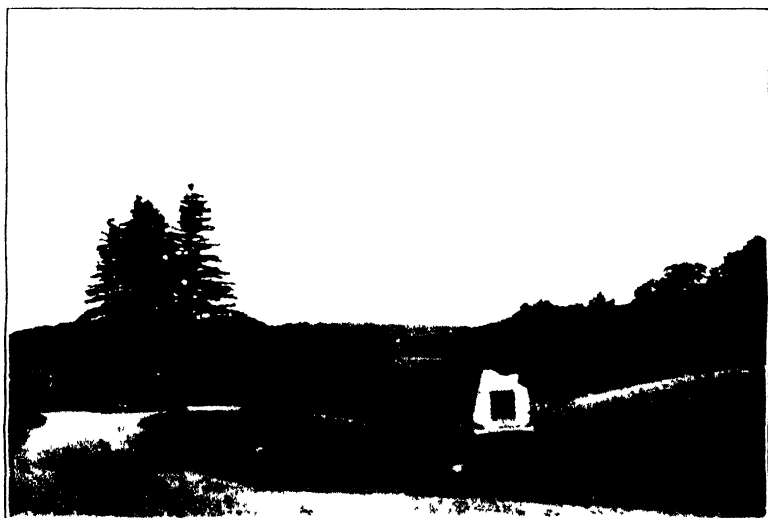
Returning to his rude fortification, which he now named Fort Necessity because of the pressing needs on all sides, Washington awaited developments. Meanwhile more than one thousand French soldiers were assembled at the forks of the Ohio, where the fort begun by Captain Trent had been enlarged, completed, and named Fort Duquesne. When Jumonville's scattered guard brought word of the disaster and news of Washington's slender force, Captain de Villiers, a brother-in-law of Jumonville, determined to have revenge. He decided to strike a quick, decisive blow.

Soon five hundred French troops and seven hundred Indian allies were on their way over the mountains through the wilderness. Scouts brought Washington the news of every movement. Half-King became alarmed and then withdrew, claiming the Indians had not been fully advised. Things were getting desperate. On May 31, Colonel Joshua Fry, Chief in Command on the frontier, died, leaving Washington in full control. Opportunity was his.

When advised that the French were only four miles away, Washington's force, increased by additional recruits to four hundred, were drawn up outside of the fort. With the attack the men fell back into the



FORT NECESSITY AT THE PRESENT TIME



ALONG THE TRAIL WHERE BRADDOCK LED HIS ARMY



renches. Heavy rains soaked them. Their powder became useless. Soon all their horses had been killed. A frontier battle, Indian style, was on with all its hideous fury. The enemy hiding in the woods of the surrounding hills kept out of view. All July 3rd, from eleven in the morning until eight o'clock at night, the battle raged.<sup>1</sup>

When darkness fell it seemed useless to hold out against odds of double their number. Three times the French asked for a parley. Finally Washington yielded to save his men from slaughter. In the misty rain, by the light of a candle, the terms were agreed upon. The Virginians were to be allowed to march out in the morning of July 4 with their arms and colors flying. Unwittingly, Washington, not understanding French nor comprehending the interpretation, had confessed that he "assassinated" Jumonville—a lie he afterwards had difficulty in disproving.

After burying their forty-three dead, the "Buckskin General"—as the French called him in derision—led his little army out. Carrying their wounded, the troops wearily trudged fifty miles back to Fort Cumberland.

Washington's defeat was but a signal. The advance lines of traders and settlers withdrew to the older settlements until the coming summer. Pioneer life on the border became hazardous. With nothing to be accomplished for the remainder of the year and momentarily tired of bickerings between the regulars and colonials over military titles, Washington resigned his military commission in October. He retired for a few months of leisure to his Potomac plantation.

<sup>1</sup> Holmes, M. D., *George Washington, The Soul of a Nation*, pp. 40-43; *Fort Necessity and Historic Shrines of the Redstone Country*, pp. 45-47.

When England learned of Washington's defeat, prompt action was decided upon. Determined to reduce Fort Duquesne, the British Government sent General Edward Braddock with a force of two regiments of regulars to aid the colonies. He was a brave soldier but he would listen to no advice. Landing at Hampton, camps and hospitals were set up for the soldiers until they re-embarked for Alexandria.<sup>1</sup>

During April, 1755, in the old Carlyle House at Alexandria, still standing and peopled by bewigged personages in the imagination of its thousands of annual visitors, plans were laid by the governors of the colonies for a four-division frontier campaign. Braddock was to command the main drive against Fort Duquesne, following Washington's route of the summer before. On Braddock's invitation, Washington became a member of his staff.

"After taking Fort Duquesne, I shall proceed to Niagara," General Braddock announced as his plan. "Duquesne can hardly detain me above three or four days; and then I can see nothing that can obstruct my march to Niagara."

Benjamin Franklin politely suggested that a British line of march strung out for four miles in the wilderness might be slaughtered by savage warfare.

"These savages may indeed be a formidable enemy to raw American militia," Braddock retorted tartly, "but upon the King's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they should make any impression."<sup>2</sup>

After careful preparation, Braddock's columns, augmented by four hundred fifty colonial Indian fighters,

<sup>1</sup> Davis, Jane E., *Jamestown and Her Neighbors*, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Russell, Phillips, *Benjamin Franklin, The First Civilized American*, pp. 179-180.

moved to Fort Cumberland. There Braddock waited more than a month for cannon. Finally on June 10 he started his march across the divide. Before him three hundred axe men toiled to widen the Washington road. Sixteen days out of Fort Cumberland word came that the French had received reinforcements at Fort Duquesne. On Washington's advice Braddock selected twelve hundred men and pushed forward to strike a quick blow. Stricken with a fever that seemed to foreshadow death, Washington begged Braddock not to attack until he had recovered. Within a few days he was again well.

As the British army neared the forks of the Ohio it grew anxious. On July 8 at the mouth of Turtle Creek, a branch of the Monongahela, eight miles from Fort Duquesne, Braddock's way led through a "wide and bushy ravine." On the hillsides under Captain Beaujeu were seventy French regulars, one hundred fifty Canadians, and six hundred fifty Indians from the Ohio Valley and points as far distant as Wisconsin.<sup>1</sup> At the signalled moment on July 9 the French and Indians flanked the British on either side of the road. Firing started from the brush. Unused to forest warfare, the "Red Coats" of the Coldstream Guard became a target for attack, tumbling like flowers before a scythe.

Superb bravery prevailed for a time among Braddock's unprotected fighters. They never sought shelter. Men fell; horses plunged under the terrible fire. Commands were no longer obeyed. Braddock rode back and forth urging his men. Four horses were shot under him. The column halted. A break came. Just as the

<sup>1</sup> Legler, Henry E., *Leading Events in Wisconsin History*, p. 113.

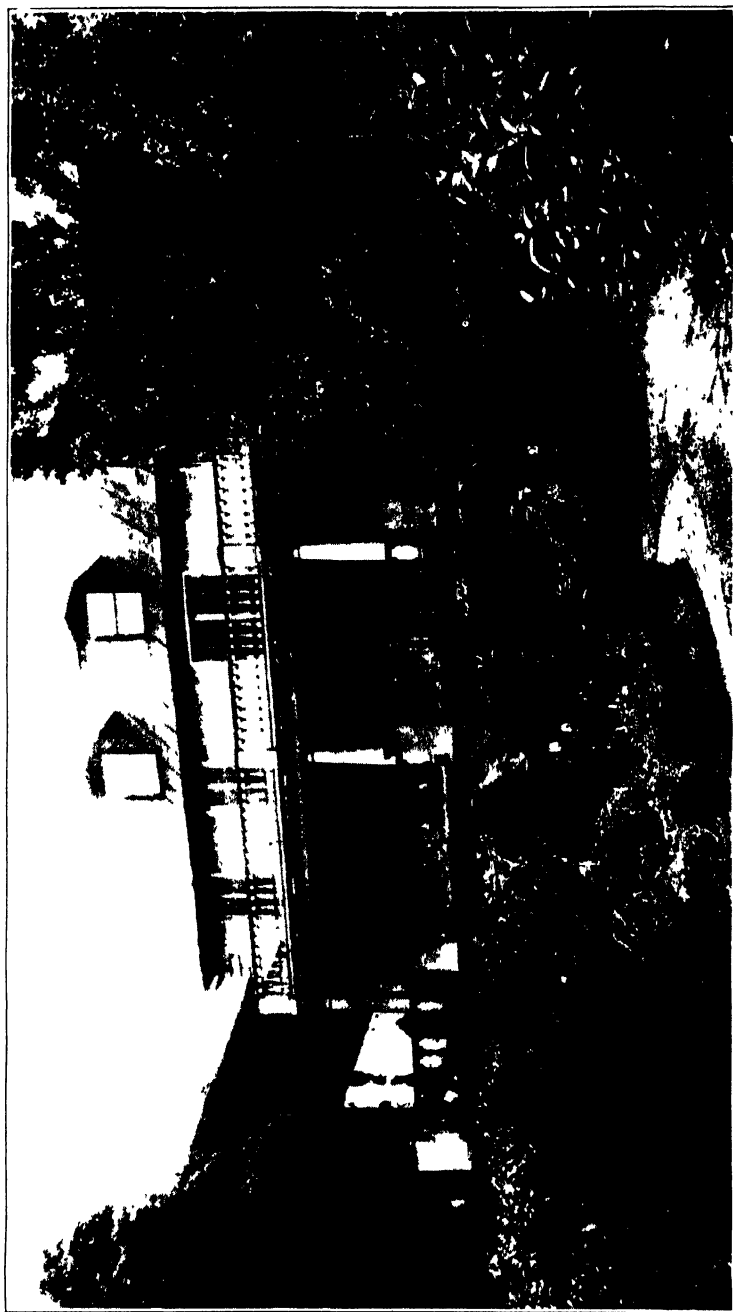
riot started, Braddock was pierced through the lung and was carried from the field.

The command now fell to Major Washington. While attempting to check the panic-stricken horde, his clothes were riddled with four bullets. Two horses fell under him. Disorder turned into a rout. British soldiers now rushed pell-mell through the forest hoping to reach the protection of cannon before being overtaken. Braddock was carried back on a litter. He hoped that he might have another opportunity. On the morning after the battle he grew weak. Foreseeing that the end was near, he willed his horse and his faithful white slave, Thomas Bishop, to Washington.

Braddock died the next day. So that Indians might not discover his grave, he was buried under the wheel tracks of the Washington road not far from Fort Necessity.

A week after the disaster all the remnants had gathered at Fort Cumberland. Out of one thousand four hundred sixty-six officers and men, but four hundred eighty-two came off safely. Their courage gone, the regulars withdrew, leaving the frontier unprotected.

Marauding Indians now began their terrible work, scalping and burning. Districts were laid waste; families were murdered in their homes. Bearing ghastly portions of the mutilated bodies of their neighbors, the backwoodsmen went to Williamsburg and demanded protection of the Governor. On August 14, on petition of a frightened line of outpost settlements, Washington was made colonel and commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces. With Winchester as the principal base, a



CARLYLE HOUSE





line of frontier forts was established by Washington.<sup>1</sup> Fort Ligonier on the Loyalhanna River was the northernmost. Fort Mayo, the site of which was rediscovered near Spencer, Virginia, in 1932, was the southernmost. Up and down the Shenandoah Valley Washington traveled, trying to raise men to protect the settlements. It was not until the Forbes campaign of 1758, when Fort Duquesne was abandoned by the French when attack was threatened, that the frontier breathed easier. Washington's crowning act was the hoisting of the British flag (November 25, 1758) over the blackened ruins of the fortification of the enemy. The place was renamed Fort Pitt in honor of the great English statesman, William Pitt. Again the West was free.

Now, in this Twentieth Century, our two-day trip from Cumberland, after our visit to the old fort, furnishes us with a close, personal insight into every event in Washington's career made memorable in the French and Indian War. All the early sites are easy of access. Eleven miles west of Somerfield and nine miles east of Uniontown, close to the roadside, is Fort Necessity. The old turnpike tavern above Great Meadows has been converted into a museum. On the original site, the Fort with its picket fence stockade has been restored. Large tablets on its walls tell the story of its fall. At the entrance is one which summarizes the consequences:

HERE JULY 3RD 1754

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE WASHINGTON FOUGHT  
HIS FIRST BATTLE WHICH MARKED THE BEGINNING OF  
THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR IN AMERICA AND STARTED

<sup>1</sup> *National Geographic Magazine*, January, 1932, pp. 34-40, gives list with map of locations

THE SEVEN YEARS WAR IN EUROPE. "A CANNON SHOT FIRED IN THE WOODS OF AMERICA," SAID VOLTAIRE, "WAS THE SIGNAL THAT SET ALL EUROPE IN A BLAZE" THIS WAR AFFECTED NOT ONLY ENGLAND AND FRANCE, BUT RUSSIA, PRUSSIA, AUSTRIA, SWEDEN AND OTHER CONTINENTAL POWERS IT GAVE LORD CLIVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF WINNING INDIA FROM THE FRENCH, MADE CANADA A BRITISH POSSESSION, WRESTED THIS WESTERN TERRITORY FROM THE FRENCH, AND THE BURDEN OF TAXES IMPOSED ON THE COLONIES TO PAY FOR THIS WAR HAD AN IMPORTANT PART IN BRINGING ON THE AMERICAN WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

Five miles westward and Summit is reached. A ten-minute walk leads to Jumonville's grave. Trees spread their shade and clumps of bushy ferns bank his resting place.

Braddock's trail, still distinguishable, leads northward.

Now we are touring in the land of colors and shades. Pittsburgh and Braddock's Field are fifty miles away. From spring until fall the mountain passes and ravines, through which Braddock led his army, are scenes of incomparable beauty. For a week in the autumn, after the first frosts, they become a fairy land of tints. There are golds and silvers, russets and browns in all degrees. Each passing shadow stirs the colorings to a new vitality. Each hour and breeze give the mountain tops a new form of splendor. There is absolute stillness in the twilight recesses.

There is no hurrying along. Time and the sun are painting a gorgeous mural and you wait and watch. Imperceptible changes advance stealthily over the woods. The shattered, tumbled rocks on the hillside glisten and glow in the sun. Perhaps the singing rill of a mountain stream enters the view. It draws a closer attention. Maples of scarlet and red, oaks of orange

and lemon intrude. The green tamaracks look solemn now. A cloud passes over the sun. A less spirited drama of changing coloring sweeps the land. Then mountain and valley come closer in silent contemplation.

Washington and Braddock fought through this country of glories.

Commerce and progress wipe away the scars of battle. Pittsburgh steel mills crowd Braddock's Field. Hid on a hillside, surrounded by buildings, stands a statue of Washington in the uniform of a major as he appeared on the day of battle. On the tip of the golden triangle of the Ohio forks, a little colonial fort strives to keep in the light. It is only a relic of centuries departed. People come to look. They go away wondering how it could afford protection to anyone. But they cannot look back two hundred years.

A circle tour out of Pittsburgh through Perryopolis, where now the old Washington mill is falling into decay,<sup>1</sup> brings us again to the old National Road at Uniontown. Over the Laurel Hill—five miles—sleeps General Braddock. Tall evergreen trees protect his eternal sanctuary. A plate on his monument recounts his deeds and passing. A park surrounds his resting place.

Fort Necessity and Braddock's grave are one mile

<sup>1</sup> Tablet near the mill reads:

PERRYOPOLIS

WASHINGTON GRIST MILL 1774-76.

GEORGE WASHINGTON AUTHORIZED COL. WM. CRAWFORD, WHO IN 1766 SETTLED AT "STEWART'S CROSSING" ON THE YOUGHIOGHENY NEAR CONNELLSVILLE, TO PURCHASE FOR HIM TRACT OF LAND NEAR HIS SETTLEMENT. ON APRIL 3, 1769, PURCHASED 1,664 ACRES INCLUDING THE PRESENT TOWN OF PERRYOPOLIS. WASHINGTON MILL BUILT IN 1774-76. IT BECAME KNOWN AS "WASHINGTON BOTTOM" AT SIMPSON'S. THE MILL BEGAN OPERATION IN 1776, AND CEASED TO RUN IN 1918. ONE OF THE OLDEST MILLS WEST OF THE ALLEGHENIES.

apart. That mile encompasses volumes of a nation's most glorious history.

From the hilltop eastward of Fort Necessity, I looked back. It's a long way to those silent, receding green mountain tops and the West beyond. It was a land worth fighting for,—worth dying for.

All was peace on the border when, in December, 1758, Washington resigned his commission.

As Christmas approached, a soldierly figure on horseback rode into the shadows of Mount Vernon. Not yet twenty-seven, Washington in five years had risen to a place of the foremost prominence in the Virginia colony. Dangers gone, he had tired of military life, and returned to his plantation on the Potomac. Giving some hurried directions for improvements, he departed a few days later for Williamsburg. As he rode along, fanciful schemes danced before his eyes. His mind was filled with plans for more home farm acres and added buildings.

Mount Vernon was soon to have a mistress.

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Braddock's grave and Fort Necessity are on the National Pike, U. S. Route 40. These historic spots are nine miles east of Uniontown and fifty miles west of Cumberland. Highway 119 leads from Uniontown to Greensburg, where it joins the Lincoln Highway Route U. S. 30 which leads to Pittsburgh. This highway follows a part of Braddock's trail. The distance from Uniontown to Pittsburgh is about one hundred miles. A picturesque return route may be made on Highway 51, leaving via Liberty Tunnels in Pittsburgh to Uniontown. It is two hundred thirty-two miles from Pittsburgh to Washington.

## CHAPTER VI

### RUINS OF A WHITE HOUSE BY THE RIVER

#### MARTHA WASHINGTON'S OLD HOME

GEORGE WASHINGTON dabbled with lovemaking for more than ten years. He was no philanderer. Women admired his worth, but his awkward manner, grave exterior, and silent ways seldom moved them to adoration. From his youth the charms of women ensnared him. Before he was twenty he wrote love lyrics to those who gave him a smile. Three are known who rebuffed his suit. The allurements of one married woman haunted his years of singleness and he never did forget her. When he met the widow he married, it was love at first sight. At a second meeting within a week he was engaged.

After Washington came into possession of Mount Vernon, in December, 1752, by the terms of the will of his half-brother Lawrence, curiosity and even gossip of the countryside over his possibilities of marriage increased. There were reasons for this interest. Early symptoms of a soft heart for women were already manifest. During the whole of his life, women held enthronement in his secret thoughts.<sup>1</sup> His eyes followed the good-looking ones.

While only sixteen he pined in a letter over a "Low Land Beauty," whose identity biographers have been

<sup>1</sup> Ford, Paul Leicester, *George Washington*, p 84

unable to name. As his youthful love sentiments welled, he grew poetical. In his journals are found gushing rhymes written for unnamed ladies:

“Oh Ye Gods why should my Poor Resistless Heart  
Stand to oppose thy might and Power  
At Last surrender to cupids feather'd Dart  
And now lays Bleeding every Hour  
For her that's Pityless of my grief and Woes  
And will not on me Pity take  
He sleep amongst my most inveterate Foes  
And with gladness never wish to wake  
In deluding sleepings let my Eyelids close  
That in an enraptured Dream I may  
In a soft lulling sleep and gentle repose  
Possess those joys denied by Day.”

“From your bright sparkling Eyes I was undone;  
Rays, you have; more transparent than the Sun,  
Amidst its glory in the rising Day  
None can you equal in your bright array;  
Constant in your calm and unspotted Mind;  
Equal to all, but will to none Prove kind,  
So knowing, seldom one so Young, you'll Find.

“Ah! woe's me, that I should Love and conceal  
Long have I wish'd, but never dare reveal,  
Even though severely Loves Pains I feel;  
Xerxes that great, was't free from Cupids Dart,  
And all the greatest Heroes, felt the smart.”

Even as he grew older his love letters throbbed with emotional feelings and were tinged with a certain idealism. At twenty, the summer before he came into possession of Mount Vernon, he wrote to William Fauntleroy that he proposed to “wait on Miss Betsey, in hopes of a revocation of the former cruel sentence, and see if

I can meet with any alteration in my favor."<sup>1</sup> She did not recant and later married another.

Four years later, in the spring of 1756, on a trip to Boston he met Mary Philipse, a belle of upper New York. On his return he tarried a whole week in her company. Dressed in his colonial uniform, which made him appear strikingly singular in a group, Colonel Washington had gone to Boston to have Governor Shirley, the commander of British troops in America, decide the question of rank between colonial officers and subordinate officers claiming a Royal Commission. Elated over a favorable order which gave colonials the same footing in rank as Royal soldiers, he stopped in New York on his return journey to enjoy the society of friends. He must have attempted to make a good impression, for his journals disclose that he freely spent his money for entertainment and large tailor bills. For Miss Philipse this was but a day of good time. She quickly forgot the dashing colonel. Later she married Roger Morris, one of the wealthiest Tories of New York, who fled with his wife to England at the opening of the Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

During all these years Washington secretly entertained in his heart a love for the wife of his friend George William Fairfax.<sup>3</sup> Sally Cary Fairfax pretended not to understand Washington's veiled suggestions of love. It was not until more than a century afterwards that the publication of two letters by Washington to Mrs. Fairfax brought the affair to light and

<sup>1</sup> Complete letter published in Sawyer, Joseph Dillaway, Vol. I, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> For a time during the Revolution Washington used their deserted home in upper New York, now called the Jumel Mansion, as his headquarters.

<sup>3</sup> Lowther, Minnie Kendall, *Mount Vernon*, pp. 25-26; Corbin, John, *The Unknown Washington*, pp. 51-75.



caused a mild sensation.<sup>1</sup> Both letters were written in 1758 while he was courting Martha Custis. The first, from the camp at Fort Cumberland, was dated September 12, 1758, and reads:

“Dear Madam:

Yesterday I was honoured with your short but very agreeable favour of the first inst. How joyfully I catch at the happy occasion of renewing a correspondence which I feared was disrelished on your part, I leave to time, that never failing Expositor of all things, and to a monitor equally as faithful in my own Breast to Testify. In silence I now express my joy. Silence, which in some cases—I wish the present—speaks more intelligibly than the sweetest Eloquence.

If you allow that any honour can be derived from my opposition to our present System of management you destroy the merit of it entirely in me by attributing my anxiety to the animating prospect of possessing Mrs. Custis, when—I need not name it, guess yourself—should not my own Honour and My Country’s welfare be the excitement? ’Tis true I profess myself a votary to love. I acknowledge that a lady is in the case; and further, I confess that this Lady is known to you. Yes, Madam, as well as she is to one who is too sensible to her charms to deny the Power whose influence he feels and must ever submit to. I feel the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I could wish to obliterate till I am bid to revive them; but experience, alas! sadly reminds me how impossible this is, and evinces an opinion, which I have long entertained, that there is a Destiny which has the sovereign control of our actions not to be resisted by the strongest efforts of Human Nature.

You have drawn me, my dear Madam, or rather I have drawn myself, into an honest confession of a

<sup>1</sup> Published in *New York Herald*, March 30, 1877; Ford, *Writings of Washington*, Vol II, pp. 95, 101.

Simple fact. Misconstrue not my meaning, 'tis obvious; doubt it not, nor expose it. The world has no business to know the object of my love, declared in this manner to—you, when I want to conceal it. One thing above all things, in this world I wish to know, and only one person of your acquaintance can solve me that or guess my meaning—but adieu to this till happier times, if ever I shall see them; the hours at present are melancholy dull—

Be assured that I am Dr. Madam with most unfeigned regard. Yr. most obedient, Most Obligated Hble Servant, Geo. Washington."

Sally answered at once but her letter is lost. She pretended not to understand his subtle suggestions. He wrote her again on September 25, chiding her for misunderstanding.<sup>1</sup>

"Dear Madam:

Do we still misunderstand the true meaning of each other's letters? I think it must appear so, though I would feign hope the contrary as I cannot speak plainer without—but I'll say no more and leave you to guess the rest. . . .

I am extremely glad to find that Mr. Fairfax (Col. George Fairfax's young brother, William Henry) has escap'd the dangers of the siege of Louisburg. . . .

I should think our time more agreeably spent, believe me, in playing a part in Cato, with the company you mention, and myself doubly happy in being the Juba to such a Marcia, as you must make. . . .

You ask if I am not tired at the length of your letter? No, Madam, I am not, nor never can be while the lines are an Inch asunder to bring you in haste to the end of the paper. You may be tired of mine by this. Adieu dear Madam, you will possibly hear something of me or from me, before we shall meet. . . ."

<sup>1</sup> These letters are published in whole or in part in Woodward, W. E., *George Washington*, pp. 99-101; Corbin, *Ibid*, pp 66-67. A letter written by Washington to her a short time before Washington died is printed in Corbin, *Ibid*, p 71.

"I cannot speak plainer without—", wrote Washington. For me that sentence remains an enigma. Because I have not been able to understand it, I left out of my itinerary the places of these will-o'-the-wisp affairs of the heart.

It was much more delightful to follow his footprints toward Williamsburg in search of the manor where he first met Martha Custis. Traveling out of Richmond one morning in the early fall, taking the long way to Williamsburg by way of West Point, I discovered the community of Washington's "love romance." A sign at the county boundary of New Kent gave some information about the marriage. I had passed the marker before I could read the brief statement. Confident that I would find other roadside directions to the spot, I slowed down to a twenty-mile rate to enjoy the scenery; hay was being raked into piles; some second growth lumber was being sawed at a little crossroads. A few miles west of Bottoms Bridge, I read with absorbing interest this marker:

#### THE WHITE HOUSE

THIS PLACE, SIX MILES NORTHEAST, WAS THE HOME OF MARTHA CUSTIS. ACCORDING TO TRADITION, GEORGE WASHINGTON FIRST MET HER AT POPLAR GROVE, NEAR BY, IN 1758 ON JANUARY 6, 1759, WASHINGTON AND MARTHA CUSTIS WERE MARRIED, IT IS BELIEVED AT THE WHITE HOUSE. THE ESTATE DESCENDED TO W. H. F. LEE, SON OF ROBERT E. LEE. THE HOUSE WAS BURNED BY UNION TROOPS WHEN McCLELLAN MADE THE WHITE HOUSE HIS BASE OF OPERATIONS IN MAY, 1862.

While I copied the recorded words, the superintendent of the highway in that vicinity approached quizzically.

"Interested in Washington?" he asked, and then

began to relate the story of Washington's marriage. It's still of more interest in the countryside than the nearby Civil War battlefields.

"The wedding occurred over near White House,<sup>1</sup> a little station on the line of the Southern railroad about six miles from here," he continued. "The first meeting was in the spring of 1758. Washington was riding down from Winchester with an important message for the Governor at Williamsburg. Maybe it had to do with the summer campaign in which General Forbes planned to retake Fort Duquesne. I really never learned. Attended by his well-trained white servant, Bishop, the dying gift of General Braddock, Major Washington fell in with Richard Chamberlayne, who lived in the vicinity of the York River.

"Together they crossed the Williams Ferry on the Pamunkey River, a tributary of the York, and, it being near noon, Washington was urged by Mr. Chamberlayne to stop and enjoy the hospitality of his home. At first he pleaded the urgency of his mission to see the Governor. He could not delay. When he was told by his companion that the wealthiest young widow in southern Virginia would be there at dinner also, he consented to remain. Before entering the home, however, he directed his servant to have his horse ready in two hours.

"Seated next to Mrs. Custis at dinner, Washington soon learned that her family were long residents of Virginia; that her husband, Daniel Parke Custis, had been dead more than a year, and that he had left two children,—John Parke Custis and Martha Custis. She

<sup>1</sup> This is not to be confused with the Presidential Mansion in Washington, D. C., the construction of which was not completed until the administration of John Adams

knew, of course, that he was a famous soldier. He was already the most noted man in the colony.

"With that punctuality which Washington always demanded, the servant had his horse at the door promptly as the hour of departure arrived. No Washington appeared. Finally the horse was tied to the big willow near the banks of the Pamunkey. Hours passed. Washington, fascinated by the charming widow, forgot his appointment. When he saw that it was already dark, he consented to remain all night at the Chamberlayne home.

"Before he departed the next morning, arrangements for a visit to her home at the White House, one mile down the Pamunkey, had been arranged. Early in May, about a week after the introduction, Washington returned. At a point down the river he accosted one of Mrs. Custis' colored servants and inquired if the mistress was home.

"*'Yas sah,'* was the response, *'I reckon you'se the man what's 'spected.'*

"When Washington left a day or so later, he was all happiness. Mrs. Custis and Major Washington were engaged. It wasn't long before all the families of the Eastern shore, where Washington was so well known, were in on the secret. They were married right after the following New Year's."

The whole story had been told in such an interesting manner that I have had difficulty in reproducing it faithfully.<sup>1</sup> It was such a stirring romance that, although both places mentioned are now privately owned, I decided upon an immediate visit.

<sup>1</sup> Irving, Washington, *Life of George Washington*, Vol. I, Chapter 24, gives a detailed account of the visit. See also *History of George Washington*, Bicentennial Celebration, Vol. III, pp. 93-95

While I was driven over, I hastily consulted a volume of Washington's correspondence and found that only one love letter to Martha, a very stilted message, remains. All of their personal correspondence was burned by her after his death—a great loss to every Washington student. Before Washington's departure on the Forbes campaign, which was to bring an end of hostilities in the French and Indian War, he sent this letter to Mrs. Custis by a special messenger:

"We have begun our march for the Ohio. A carrier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy time when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as another Self. That an all powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate friend."

By a winding road, which passed through wilderness scenes and by-roads of cool attractiveness, I came first to the Chamberlayne home at Poplar Grove. Its site on the Pamunkey is unusual. Looking up the river is a jut of land from which the Williams Ferry once operated.

"There is the old willow where Washington's horse was tied while waiting for him on his first visit," an attendant explained, pointing to the tree by the river-side.

Turning toward the historic red-brick mansion,<sup>1</sup> with its wide verandas and sweeping view of the curving river, I realized what a gathering place this must have been for those Cavaliers of Washington's genera-

<sup>1</sup> This home is now owned by Frank V Baldwin, 1411 Broadway, New York City

tion. Its stairway has a quaint charm. The long dining room, with its fireplace, where Washington lingered, gives forth a glowing warmth lent by the story of one of the finest romances ever unfolded. The high-ceilinged room, where Washington slept that night, with its deep windows, makes the old mansion bespeak the gallantry and taste of the hospitality afforded its distinguished guest.

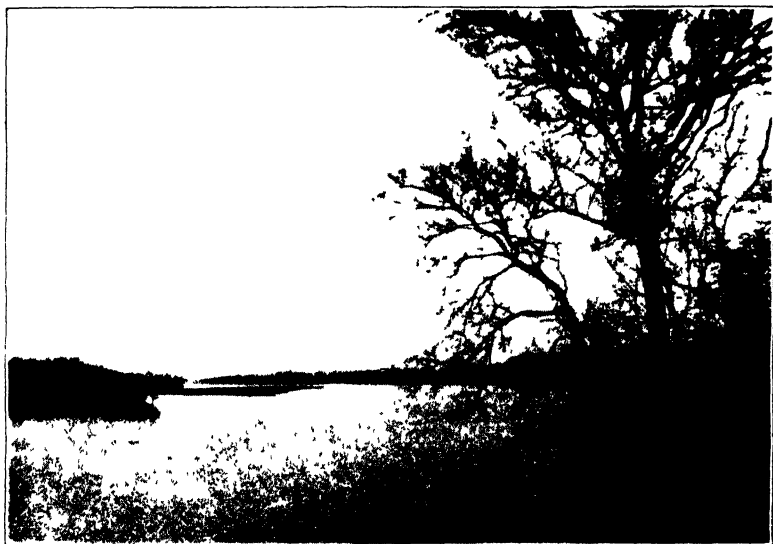
One mile down the Pamunkey—probably two miles by road—a promontory of land extends into the river. On this point stood the White House, where Washington married Martha Custis, January 6, 1759.<sup>1</sup> The wedding was a social event of the winter attended by the Governor and his staff and the high society of the aristocratic families along the Eastern shore. Washington, tall and stately, his hair powdered, wearing a sword and dressed in steely blue, was the most gallant figure of the assemblage. Martha, short and petite, gowned in satin, wearing pearl ornaments and brilliants for slipper buckles, was a bride of distinctive charm. As they stood before the Reverend Peter Mossum,<sup>2</sup> rector of St. Peter's, the guests noticed that the crown of her head came scarcely to the groom's shoulder. Both were in their twenty-seventh year.

After the marriage, Washington spent three months either at the White House or at the city home of the bride, "the house of the Six Chimneys" in Williamsburg. Under the old law of Virginia, all of the real estate owned by the wife descended to the husband on marriage.<sup>3</sup> Washington came into possession of more

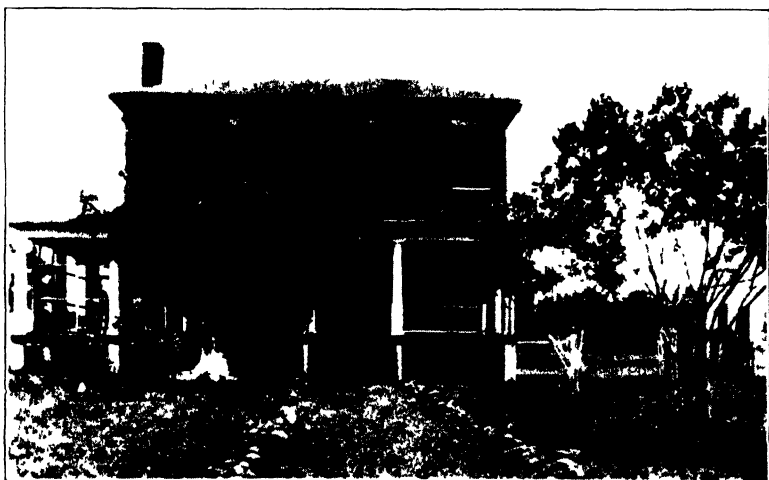
<sup>1</sup> Gray, The Reverend Arthur, *The White House—Washington's Marriage Place, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. XLII, No. 30, July, 1934, pp. 229-240

<sup>2</sup> Thayer, William Roscoe, *George Washington*, p. 35

<sup>3</sup> Woodward, W. E., *Ibid.*, p. 102.



THE BROAD SWEEP OF THE PAMUNKEY



CHAMBERLAYNE HOME, POPLAR GROVE





than four thousand acres of land and was named as the guardian of properties valued at one hundred thousand dollars owned by her children.

"Well, I have a new manager for my estates," commented Mrs. Washington after the wedding. Her holdings were badly in need of supervision.

For a time during the Civil War the White House manor was the base of McClellan's operations in his campaign on Richmond. With the withdrawal of troops the house was burned, in spite of the placard affixed to the door:

IN THIS HOUSE GEORGE WASHINGTON AND MARTHA  
DANDRIDGE (CUSTIS) WERE UNITED IN MARRIAGE.  
WHETHER YOU BE FRIEND OR FOE, SPARE IT FROM THE  
DEPREDATIONS OF WAR.<sup>1</sup>

Around the ruins, where once stood the White House,—a name which Washington afterwards applied to the presidential mansion in the federal city—a clump of spindling trees spread their sheltering branches.<sup>2</sup> In a heap in the center are the bricks of the dismantled fireplace. From every direction spread rural vistas to delight the eye.

I drank at the old spring at the river side, where Washington and his wife so often met. I rambled around the deserted yard. Then I sat on the Pamunkey river banks where they must have gathered in the mild evenings of spring to witness the sun depart.

From the spot where once swung open the door of the home to hospitable guests, there are changing panoramas in the graceful sweep of the river. The over-

<sup>1</sup> *Homes of George Washington*, pamphlet issued by Bicentennial Commission, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> This manor is now owned by Dr. George Bolling Lee of New York, a grandson of General Robert E. Lee, and the fifth owner of the historic place, who inherited it through his father, W. H. F. Lee.

hanging branches, the mirrored clouds, the birds skimming the placid waters add to one's bewitchment of the scene. There is nothing imposing in the landscape. The beauty is serene and the surroundings pure. True happiness came here to George Washington.

"I am now, I believe," he wrote from Mount Vernon six months after the wedding, "fixed in this seat, with an agreeable partner, for life; and I hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced in the wide and bustling world."

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The White House may be reached from two directions. From Richmond, Virginia, follow eastward on U. S. Route 60 and Route 4. A sign by the roadside between Bottoms Bridge and New Kent gives direction to follow a county route six miles north to Poplar Grove. From West Point follow Route 4 west to the same roadside sign.

## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ROYALTY

#### OLD WILLIAMSBURG

SET against Williamsburg, Virginia—with its sixty-five years of obedient service under the crest of the Crown; its nights of eager watching of the brilliant social functions of Royalty; its days when from behind latticed windows hid by mulberry lanes it witnessed the unfolding pageant of the crucial hours in Colonial history—most other places appear like recent creations.

For sixteen years George Washington was a Colonial legislator here, serving at a time when the majesty of the King ruled at its zenith. These were the days of gallant living. Spending his winters with his wife at the Capital in the atmosphere of the bow and the curtsy of polite, aristocratic society, and in the culture of the second oldest university in America, softened his manners and added to his poise.

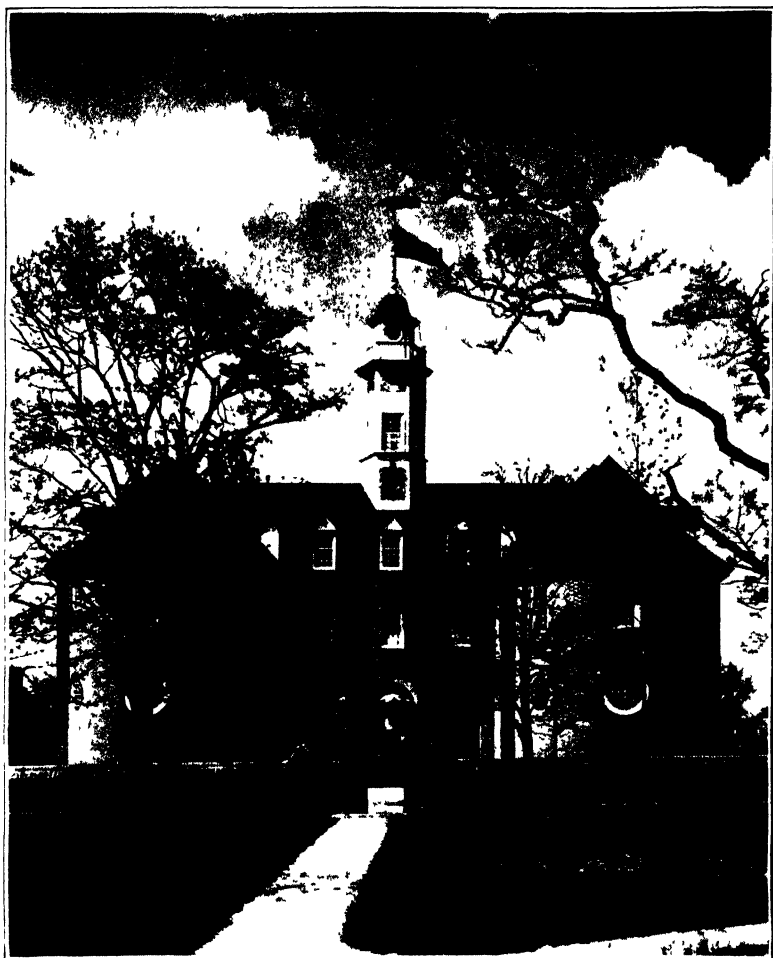
Today, under the magic wand of restoration, Williamsburg appears again as it did in Washington's time. The present is tramping out; the past is moving back. Three hundred fifty buildings which marred the old picture have been swept away. Old-fashioned gardens, set off with boxwoods and clinging vines, bloom once more. All that are lacking on its streets are the Royal Governor dressed in ruffles and purple, sur-

rounded by his guard; the Cavaliers in powdered wigs, knee breeches and buckled shoes, and the familiar faces of Washington, Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and a score of other Colonial patriots whose love of liberty helped to mold a new nation.

Among the landed gentry of Virginia it was a coveted honor to become a member of the House of Burgesses, the Colonial legislative assembly. George Washington's grandfather, his father and his brothers had served as lawmakers, and it was but natural that George should aspire to follow them. Like Lincoln, Washington was defeated in his first attempt to be elected.

Unlike the present requirement that a man must live in the district, the Colonial law permitted the voters to select whom they desired as a representative regardless of residence. In 1756 Washington sought the suffrage of the voters of Frederick County, west of the Blue Ridge, where his benefactor, Lord Fairfax, lived. During the campaign a slighting reference by him to "tippling housekeepers" precipitated a modern day "wet" and "dry" campaign. The tavern-keepers united upon his opponent. Washington refused to make treating a test for gathering votes, with the result that he was defeated, two hundred seventy votes to forty. Two years later, on July 24, 1758, the voters of Frederick County recanted and elected Washington during his absence on the Forbes campaign.

Apparently Washington had learned a lesson in practical politics. His expense accounts disclose that he permitted his friends to change the previous method of campaigning. His election cost him thirty-nine pounds, six shillings, and included in the expense were



CAPITOL AT WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA



one hundred eighteen gallons of various liquors, and ten bowls of punch. Three pounds went for a "dinner for your friends."

"If thanks flowing from a heart replete with joy and gratitude can in any Measure compensate for the fatigue, anxiety and Pain you had at my election, be assured you have them," he wrote his campaign manager.<sup>1</sup>

When he took his seat on February 22, 1759, his twenty-seventh birthday, he was one of the youngest members of that body. He continued as a Burgess from Frederick County for three terms and, after 1765, from Fairfax County, where Mount Vernon is located, until he went to the Continental Congress in 1774.

During Washington's legislative service, Williamsburg was the capital city. Transferred from Jamestown in 1699, following a fire which destroyed the State House buildings, social life at the new seat of government soon became so gay that it was said to resemble the Court of St. James. On state occasions the Governor's carriage was drawn by six white horses.<sup>2</sup> Gentlemen dressed in bright velvets; judges wore scarlet, and the clergy appeared in dignified black.

The plan of the city lent itself to brilliant state functions and ceremonies. At one end of a mile-long thoroughfare, still called Duke of Gloucester Street, is William and Mary College, which received its seal from the Royal College of Heralds in 1693. At the other end of the street stood the old Capitol, now restored, where Patrick Henry made his famous "Caesar-Brutus" speech; where Washington sat each winter

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, Jane E., *Jamestown and Her Neighbors*, p. 35.



for sixteen years as a member of the House of Burgesses, and where the control of the Assembly was wrested in 1775 from the Royalists.

Midway between Capitol and College, to the North, on the Palace Green, was the Governor's mansion—the home of all the Royal Executives after 1715. This was the center of social life. George Washington was frequently entertained there. With the Revolution, however, dark days came to the romantic community.

For protection from raiding ships, Governor Thomas Jefferson in 1779 moved the Capital inland to Richmond. Then for more than a century Williamsburg declined. Fire destroyed some of the college buildings; buttercups flowered on the Palace Green where cattle pastured; residences built in the old days fell into dilapidation. The pomp of Royalty fled.

Came the Reverend W. A. R. Goodwin—a dreamer—to accept the pastorate of historic Bruton Church. Looking from his study windows, Dr. Goodwin dreamed of a Royal Colonial Capitol restored; dreamed of streets and buildings as they were in the Colonial days gone by; dreamed of recreating from tumbled bricks and ash heaps Williamsburg as the traditional center of political, social and religious life of the Virginia Colony.

To test his dreams, Bruton, the oldest Episcopal Church in continuous use, was restored; the old Wythe House, where lived the lawyer who trained Thomas Jefferson, John Marshall, James Monroe, Henry Clay, and other famous men, and where Washington had his headquarters in the Yorktown campaign, was given a renewed Colonial visage.

Sleeping Williamsburg was aroused. Mr. John D.

Rockefeller, Jr., became interested in the dreamer and in his dreams.<sup>1</sup> After a visit he announced that he would back the rejuvenation of Williamsburg as a shrine to the Fathers of the Republic. He financed the restoration with \$10,000,000. Seven years of planning and building have gone by and the undertaking is still unfinished. In time, it will become our greatest National Museum of American history.

I went there because Washington knew Williamsburg so well. I lingered because I saw, in the unfolding of this "city that was," an old civilization stir restlessly from its awakening dreams. The charm of by-gone days has returned. The mulberry trees planted here when it was hoped the Colony would become a silk manufacturing center have been trimmed;<sup>2</sup> asphalt streets have been torn up and cobblestone laid; brick and flagstone have taken the place of cement for walks; telephone wires have been hidden underground; modern store buildings have given way to Colonial trading posts; and the Royal government buildings have risen again in gorgeous splendor. To the America of tomorrow this rehabilitation will preserve for all time the most typical governing city of our Colonial period.

After two centuries the description by Mary Johnston, whose novel "Audrey" tells of Old Williamsburg as she saw it from her home on the Palace Green, is more faithful than ever:

"Houses of red brick, houses of white wood; the long wide, dusty Duke of Gloucester Street; gnarled mulberry-trees broad-leaved against a September sky, deep-

<sup>1</sup> Lucas, Dorothy, *This Town Grows Backward*, McCall's Magazine, November, 1930, Brock, H I, *Williamsburg Recaptures Its Colonial Past*, The Literary Digest, March 3, 1934; Owen, Abbie Ellis, *Turning Back the Clock in Old Williamsburg*, The Christian Science Monitor, Weekly Magazine Section, February 14, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, Marietta Minnigerode, *George Washington's Country*, p 198.

ly, passionately blue; glimpses of wood and field,—all seemed remote without distance, still without stillness, the semblance of a dream, and yet keen and near to oppression. It was a town of stores, of ordinaries and public places; from open door and window all along Duke of Gloucester Street came laughter, round oaths, now and then a scrap of drinking song.”<sup>1</sup>

Not satisfied with my own visits about the recreated city, I engaged an interested student of William and Mary College to conduct me around. Williamsburg has grown up again so fast one needs a guide.

“Let’s see everything that Washington saw; visit every place that Washington visited,” I admonished him.

He smiled as if the request had often been heard.

Washington received his commission as a surveyor from William and Mary College in 1749. Such a trust could only be issued upon an examination. Washington must have gone there. The main building, designed by Sir Christopher Wren and built in 1695, is the oldest, although much changed in outline through many repairs. We proceeded to inspect it.

“For years we have diligently been searching the old records for the original entry of Washington’s appointment as a surveyor,” a College official told me. “So far we have been unsuccessful. We know, however, that some day we shall find it, for the record of the original appointment under the College seal is on file in Culpeper County.”<sup>2</sup>

Down Duke of Gloucester Street, toward the Cap-

<sup>1</sup> Johnston, Mary, *Audrey*, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> Following is the record in Culpeper County for July 20, 1749:

“George Washington, Gent. produced a Commission from the President and Masters of William and Mary College, appointing him to be surveyor of this county, which was read and thereupon he took the usual oaths to his majesty’s person and government and took and subscribed the adjuration oath and test, and then took the oath of surveyor, he became an officer of the colony.”

itol, we passed. All the business blocks are of Colonial design, with not a red store front to offend.

"This is the only city in America where painting a building a special or gaudy color is prohibited," remarked the guide.

As we entered Bruton Church the sexton met us. The restoration of the edifice was begun in 1905 by Dr. Goodwin, he said, as he led us down the aisle to the elevated, crimson-canopied pews where the Royal Governors worshipped. He directed our steps by the baptismal font and communion service, rescued from the church at Jamestown where John Smith made the first settlement in 1607; showed us the Book of Common Prayer with the words "President of the United States" pasted over those of the "King," a change which came with the Revolution; and opened the door so we might enter the pew of Washington at the right of the lectern.

"There is a record of Washington's presence here fourteen times," the sexton told me. I did not ask to see the record.

The brown-stained Wythe House, which Washington used as a headquarters prior to the siege of Yorktown, built in 1755 on the Palace Green, near the church, is now the parish home. Its glamour glows in literature. It was portrayed by Ellen Glasgow, the novelist, as the home of Judge Bassett in "The Voice of the People."

At the end of the Green is a Governor's Palace, rebuilt. For sixty years this imposing, castle-like building was used as the home of the Colonial Executives. It saw the old life at its best.<sup>1</sup> The present building is

<sup>1</sup> A List of Governors who lived in the Governor's Palace, together with the years in which they took office

Colonel Alexander Spotswood—1710, Hugh Drysdale—1722; William Gooch—

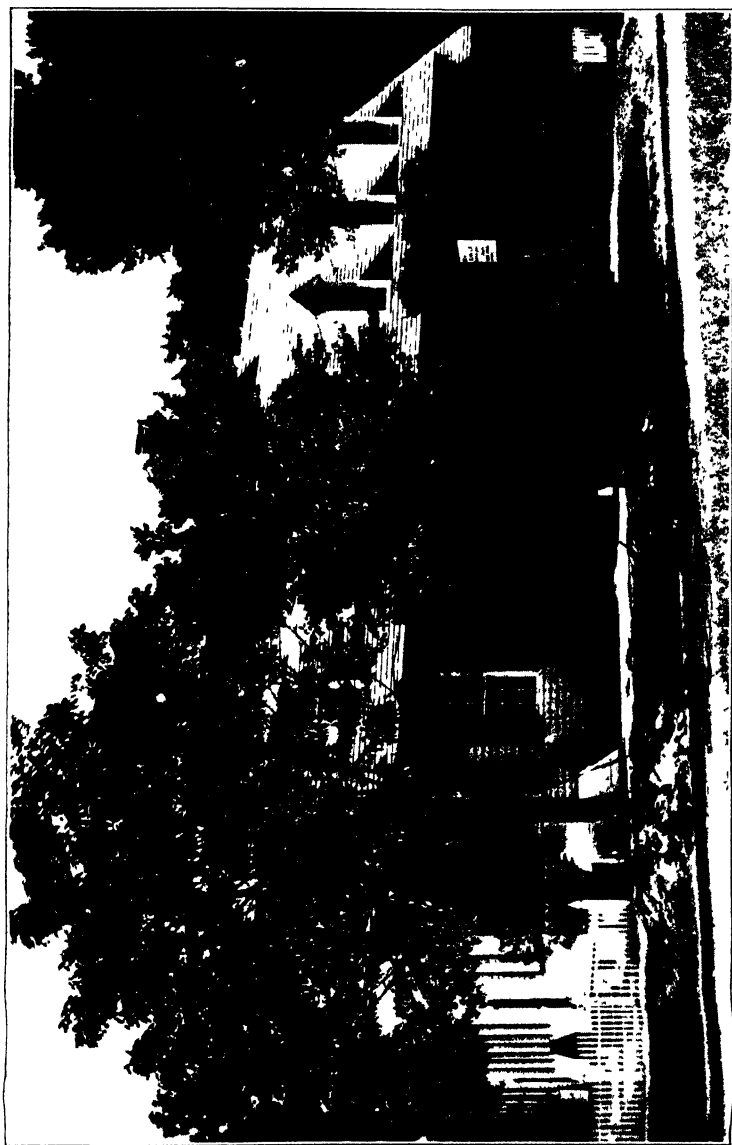
elaborate in design, with the various rooms tinted in the most pleasing colors. As it was of old, the fire-places are outlined by choice marbles gathered from foreign lands; the large rooms are furnished with antique furniture and needle-point rugs. Associated with the Palace are a group of buildings, kitchen and laundry, gardens and fish ponds, which recall the regal life lived luxuriously by many of the Crown-appointed Executives.

As I looked over both buildings and grounds, I wondered what Washington thought of all this exhibition of splendor, when in 1753 he arrived to receive his commission from Governor Dinwiddie to ask the French to retire from the Ohio Valley, or when he returned on so many later occasions to confer as to the desperate conditions of the poor Colonists on the unprotected frontier.

Leaving the Palace of color and gold, we roamed about the streets for simpler things to see and talk about. Martha Washington lived in Williamsburg when she was the wife of Daniel Parke Custis—and later she and Colonel Washington spent their winters here while he attended the sessions of the Burgesses. He resided here first in 1759, one month after marriage, when he came to Williamsburg to participate as a newly elected member in the deliberations of the Burgesses. Only the kitchen of their house of "The Six Chimneys" still stands.

Nearby in the public square is the octagonal, red-

1727; Robert Dinwiddie—1751; Francis Fauquier—1758; Norborne Berkley, Baron de Butetourt—1768; John Murray, Earl of Dunmore—1771; Patrick Henry—1776; Thomas Jefferson—1779. Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson were the first governors of the Commonwealth of Virginia after the separation from Great Britain



RALEIGH'S TAVERN, WILLIAMSBURG



brick Powder Horn, with its steep roof, built by Governor Spotswood as an armory and munitions house; and in the same vicinity we visited the poor debtors' prison and the home of John Tyler, where Daniel Webster's son went to notify him of his elevation to the Presidency, only to find him over on Duke of Gloucester Street shooting marbles.<sup>1</sup>

"Raleigh's Tavern!" shouted the guide as we again walked down Duke of Gloucester Street toward the Capitol. I stopped, unable for the moment to comprehend his excitement.

"The most famous hostelry in all the Colonies," he went on. "Royal Governors drank here to their King and dined in state. Washington came often for cards and recreation, and here Jefferson danced with the fair Belinda."<sup>2</sup>

Built on its original foundations, the famous old tavern has been restored even to the tap room and the seventeen guest chambers. In the Apollo room used for dancing and gatherings, Phi Beta Kappa, the National honorary scholastic society, was founded in 1776. When the final break came between the Crown and the Burgesses, and the Governor dissolved the legislature, May 24, 1774, over the majority stand against the Boston Port Bill, it was in this "Cradle of Liberty" that the obstinate members gathered "to deliberate on those general measures which the United Interests of America may from time to time require."<sup>3</sup>

At the end of Duke of Gloucester Street, the beautiful Capitol building, erected in 1705, has been re-

<sup>1</sup> Ducas, Dorothy, *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Burwell See Watson, Thomas E., *Life and Times of Thomas Jefferson*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> Tyler, Moses Coit, *Patrick Henry*, p. 98



stored. When George Washington entered the legislative chambers in February, 1759, to take his seat for the first time as a member, the Speaker, John Robinson, arose to greet him and thank him for his distinguished military services in behalf of the Colony.

Trembling and stammering, Washington arose to reply. As the Speaker saw his embarrassment he smiled.

"Sit down, Mr. Washington," he thundered. "Your modesty equals your valor, and that surpasses the power of any language I possess."

As a member Washington seldom was heard in debate. He was an adviser. Within the membership he soon was aligned with those who opposed the obnoxious measures of taxation urged by the Crown.

Washington was opposed to the Stamp Act (1765). He wrote:

"And the eyes of our people, already beginning to open, will perceive, that many luxuries, which we lavish our substance in Great Britain for, can well be dispensed with, whilst the necessities of life are (mostly) to be had within ourselves."

Washington was opposed to the Non-Importation Act (1769-1770). On May 17, 1769, he met with other Burgesses at the Raleigh Tavern where was presented the Non-Importation Agreement prepared by George Mason. This document was signed by each member and then printed and circulated. Washington wrote to his London agent:

"You will perceive, in looking over the several invoices, that some of the goods there required, are upon condition, that the act of Parliament imposing a duty on tea, paper, &c. for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, is totally repealed; and I beg the favor of

you to be governed strictly thereby, as it will not be in my power to receive any articles contrary to our non-importation agreement, which I have subscribed, and shall religiously adhere to, and should, if it were, as I could wish it to be, ten times as strict."

Washington was opposed to the Boston Port Bill (1774). He wrote:

"Is not the attack upon the liberty and property of the people of Boston, before restitution of the loss to the India Company was demanded, a plain and self-evident proof of what they are aiming at? Do not the subsequent bills (now I dare say acts), for depriving the Massachusetts Bay of its charter, and transporting offenders into other colonies or to Great Britain for trial, where it is impossible from the nature of the thing that justice can be obtained, convince us that the administration is determined to stick at nothing to carry its point? Ought we not, then, to put our virtue and fortitude to the severest test?"

Washington favored independent action and attended the Virginia Convention at Williamsburg, August 1-6, 1774. There he presented the famous Fairfax Resolves. In a speech to the Convention, he said:

"I will raise one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston."

Stubbornness of the Crown in refusing to compromise or cooperate with the Colonies made a patriot of George Washington. It was a slowly growing process, which probably came to a climax in the Old Williamsburg Capitol as he listened to Patrick Henry, ten years before the Revolution, denounce the Stamp Act: "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles I had his Crom-

well, and George III—may profit by his example,” with the dash in the sentence accentuating the cries of “Treason” by the Speaker and Royalist members.

There is an imposing atmosphere of Royal dignity about the rejuvenated red-brick Capitol building. It is crowned by a clock tower on which the arms of Queen Anne are blazoned. During her reign the original building was erected. There are no chimneys. Of old, there was no heating apparatus in it.<sup>1</sup> On cold days each member of the Colonial legislature brought two hot bricks to the session to keep his feet warm. When all the bricks were cold, the session adjourned.

Seven years after Washington had ended his service in the House of Burgesses, he returned again to Williamsburg. At the head of a conquering army, which had just received the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown, he marched by the Capitol, down Duke of Gloucester Street. The ideals of Mason and Henry, Jefferson and Washington, reviled so often in the House of Burgesses, had triumphed. The rule of the King was ended forever.

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Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown are separated by only a few miles. The Pocahontas Trail, U. S. Route 60, leads from Richmond, Virginia, to Newport News. Williamsburg is midway.

<sup>1</sup>In 1770, four years before Washington closed his service in the House, a three-story stove of ornamental design was built for the Colonial House by order of Lord Botetourt, governor. Within recent years it was on exhibit at the Capitol in Richmond, Virginia.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ROMANTIC HOMES AND RADIANT GARDENS

#### MOUNT VERNON NEIGHBORHOOD

GARDENS of old-fashioned flowers, tucked behind either sunny brick walls or shiny green hedges, are the joy and pride of every ancestral home in Virginia. Each walk and each shaded path reflect memories of long ago. Each smiling cup has flowered silently so long in its secluded nook that it seems bursting with stories of the seldom-mentioned Great who once paused for a look as they passed that way. These radiant gardens are as much the life of Colonial Virginia in which Washington lived as are the reposeful plantation houses he so often visited.

After his marriage, as the garden of Mount Vernon was developed with new plantings of seeds and shrubs, it became the daily delight of its proud owner. With his faithful dogs—True Love, Mopsy, Sweet Lips, Music, and Rover <sup>1</sup>—at his heels, he walked in it early each morning before starting on horseback over the plantation. Each year saw some improvement in its orderly arrangement. On his journeys to attend the session of the Burgesses at Williamsburg, on his visits to New York and Philadelphia, he brought back impressions of the beautiful places visited which he was able to recreate on his own grounds. That is the rea-

<sup>1</sup> James River Garden Club, *Historic Gardens of Virginia*, p. 191.

son why Mount Vernon possesses "all the elements of outdoor enjoyment that are found in the best of the Colonial homes and gardens."<sup>1</sup>

With the return of the Washingtons from Williamsburg in the spring of 1759, three months after their marriage, neighborly life began. Jack and Patsy Custis, children of Mrs. Washington, had returned with them to make Mount Vernon their future home. Visits to the nearby country estates now became the pastime of the Washingtons. Days were spent as the guests of the Masons at Gunston Hall; with the Fairfaxes at Belvoir; with the Carters of Shirley, Nomony, and Sabine Hall; with the Lees of Stratford, and the Byrds of Westover.<sup>2</sup> Return visits followed within a fortnight. During two months of 1768 Washington and his wife were at the homes of neighbors for nine days and had evening guests or dinner parties on twenty-nine days. All this appears typical of the Washington home life before the Revolution.

Slowness of travel during Colonial days led to more prolonged visits of friends than are customary with present modes. With chariot, or coach, or on horseback, seven miles was the hourly maximum. Roads were either rough, dusty, or muddy. Travel was the hardest kind of work and was too costly for Sunday afternoon joy-riding. Plantation homes were self-sufficient units in community life, combining all the arts of trade and manufacture. Everything people now obtain from mail-order houses or purchase at local stores was produced within the home.

Society also was developed at the Colonial fireside.

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol II, p 184

<sup>2</sup> Ford, Paul Leicester, *Ibid*, p 217.



FLOWER GARDENS AT MOUNT VERNON



There was no place to go for outside entertainment. The house and the garden were the center of family life. People spent their time at home. Slaves and servants did the work. Rooms were of spacious design to afford entertainment. The mammoth fireplaces spread heat and glow. Everybody danced. Almost everyone played cards. Washington enjoyed both diversions until the last year of his retirement.

A never-failing joy of the Virginia planter was the beauty of the garden. Pause for a moment at the gate of Gunston Hall on the Potomac, five miles above Mount Vernon. It is the old home of George Mason, author of the Bill of Rights, whose logic moulded Washington, and whose personality stamped generations. Inhale the fragrance of hollyhock and snapdragon; scent the perfume of mignonette and candytuft; gaze at the delicate hues of the honeysuckle and the deep heart of the crimson rose. Washington admired these. Gunston Hall and close by Belvoir were his favorite visiting places. To others he went only on special occasions.<sup>1</sup>

"Of the famous Manor houses along the James river, most were familiar to the Washingtons," the guide at Williamsburg told me. "After Washington married, a few months were spent each year by the family at the White House on the Pamunkey river, while he looked after his wife's estate. Then he mingled in the company of the Byrds and the Randolphs, and at Burwell Bassetts in Williamsburg.<sup>2</sup> All had gardens of beauty."

No mansion was more familiar to Washington than

<sup>1</sup> Andrews, Marietta Minnigerode, *Ibid*, p. 90

<sup>2</sup> James River Garden Club, *Ibid*, pp. 16-24.



Belvoir, the Fairfax homestead on the Potomac. From boyhood he had visited there. When Martha Washington came to Mount Vernon, Anne Fairfax was her first caller. Not a week passed that there was not an exchange of company. The original home was partly burned in 1786. It was restored but shelled by the British in 1812. It is now swallowed up in the site of Camp Humphreys.

Each Colonial mansion has its own history and singular attractions. For a few days in the spring and autumn of each year the old plantation homes and quaint gardens of Virginia are opened to the public. The occasions are awaited events. Then time turns back the page. Memories regale. From their frames on the walls great men smile at their welcome guests. Mirth and laughter summon again the bygone, happy days. With half-closed eyes the visitor shuts out the present. Through the gateways of old gardens, loved by adventurous men and gracious women, passes once more the panorama of Colonial Governors, the Washingtons, Masons, Fairfaxes, and scores of others who live in the shadow of Virginia's glory and extend an old time welcome.

Washington was happiest when out of doors, riding in the saddle, inspecting his acres. He loved land. His famous diary, begun on January 1, 1760, and continued with few breaks until his death, reveals a joy in farming—a leisure spent in hunting, card playing, and dancing.<sup>1</sup>

"Agriculture has ever been the most favorite amusement of my life," he wrote after the Revolution.

For a bookplate in his library he had a design of a

<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick, John C., *George Washington, Colonial Traveler*, p. 154, et seq

landholder and cultivator, surrounded by spears of wheat and other plants, all characteristic of his favorite activity.

Holding large tracts of land was a distinction of wealth in Colonial times. Large owners were highly respected. Washington was land-hungry.

He made a nine weeks' trip—his farthest into the West—down the Ohio in the Fall of 1770, accompanied by Dr. James Craik to inspect and select wild lands granted to him and the soldiers of Virginia, North of the Great Kanawha River, for services in the French and Indian War.<sup>1</sup> This added thousands of acres to his holdings.

He bought from his neighbors;<sup>2</sup> he rented lands of others. At one time, holdings of sixty thousand acres in several states were his. By frequent purchases Mount Vernon became an estate of over eight thousand acres, divided into five units, each with an overseer—"Mansion House Farm," "River Farm," "Union Farm," "Muddy Hole Farm," and "Dogue Run Farm."<sup>3</sup>

Weekly reports were required by Washington of his supervisors. His personal attention was given to the farms when he was home. Many of his evenings were spent planning farm details. Each day was spent in the saddle riding to even the more remote parts. His dogs always followed along. He experimented with crop rotation, fertilization, plant diseases, early seeding. He kept records, watched the weather, and tabulated production. He was the first American farmer to raise

<sup>1</sup> Trip begun October 5, 1770. Map of journey in *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 411, Plate 31. Map of George Washington Land Holdings, *Ibid*, p. 428, Plate 48.

<sup>2</sup> Haworth, Paul Leland, *George Washington, Country Gentleman*, pp. 16-36.

<sup>3</sup> Map of farms drawn by Washington in 1793 reprinted in *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 98.

mules.<sup>1</sup> He was one of the first to make potato-growing profitable.

"If Washington were alive today he would be the greatest patron of our agricultural colleges," a farmer whom I met at Mount Vernon remarked. "He tried to do what the colleges are now doing."

When Washington found that tobacco leached the land, he turned to wheat. In ten years after 1763 his tobacco-raising dropped from eighty-nine thousand to five thousand pounds. Instead, he grew flax, hay, clover, buckwheat, turnips, and potatoes. The excess was sold. He raised hogs, cattle and horses. He salted his own pork; dried his own beef; made his own brick; burned his own charcoal; packed his own fish; raised fruit and vegetables; manufactured flour, cider, whiskey; and wove infinite varieties of cloth.<sup>2</sup> To do the home arts required over one hundred workers—some Negroes, some indentured servants, and some hired laborers. Washington was a "country gentleman."

Twice Mount Vernon Manor was enlarged, first in 1760 and then in 1785. A library and a banquet hall were added; the roof was raised to make a third story. Always there was company. Sit down on the veranda of Mount Vernon and let the past steal upon you. Look at the visiting mothers with their families, enjoying the day.

Children—Washington loved them. With none of his own, he became more attached to those of his wife. In a long consignment of goods to be shipped from England he ordered:

<sup>1</sup> Ford, Paul Leicester, *George Washington*, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, Paul Leicester, *Ibid*, pp. 120-125

"One pair of handsome silver shoe and knee buckles, ten shillings' worth of toys, and six little books for children beginning to read. For Miss Custis, four years old, two caps, two pairs of ruffles, two tuckers, bibs and aprons, if fashionable, a fashionably dressed baby (ten shillings), and other toys."

A later order for the children called for:

"One fashionably dressed doll to cost a guinea, a box of gingerbread toys and sugar images or comfits."

Around the quiet of their own home Martha had a habit of taking hold of a button on her husband's coat and hanging on to it while she appealed for some promise. Sometimes she called him "Old Man"—a familiar term applied even today to husbands in the South. He often called her "Patsy." There is no record of quarrels.

Beside her, Washington appeared over-grown. He was six feet two inches tall and weighed one hundred seventy-five pounds. Feet and hands were large, shoulders wide. His complexion was fair, and his hair of chestnut he wore in a queue. He looked stern. Seldom did he tell a joke, and there is no record of the exact words of any conversation with a contemporary.<sup>1</sup> When alone together, George and Martha talked as children.

So the years of happiness and manorial gaiety passed. Sometimes the Washingtons drove by chariot to Alexandria to a dance, and spent the night in their town house. Sometimes they went by water, rowed by six Negroes, to visit the Masons at Gunston Hall and

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, W. E., *A Close-Up of George Washington*, The Nation Magazine, February 17, 1932, pp. 191-192.

take tea. When at home, seldom were they alone at dinner.

Down the stream of life drifted the quiet couple—revered, beloved. They saw without fear black clouds on the political horizon. She hoped that the sun would disperse them. He looked on in silence—action seemed inevitable.

I followed the Washingtons to some of the homes they visited. Time has made these places more than ever romantic. I sat in the cool of the gardens the Washingtons loved. Nature has translated the radiance of old-fashioned flowers into poetic language, expressive of a glorious past and of the visible beauty of the now-a-days in Old Virginia.

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The State of Virginia has issued a map which locates all the historic manor houses. The James River Garden Club of Richmond, Virginia, publishes data on the opening days for visitors. These publications will prove efficient guides.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE TABERNACLE OF FREEDOM

#### ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

STILL standing in Richmond, Virginia, is the white clap-boarded church where Colonel Washington voted with others under the magic wand of Patrick Henry's oratory to raise troops to fight the aggressions of British rule. It is Liberty's first barricade in Virginia. The men who gathered there joined with besieged Boston to sing the prelude that swelled into a diapason fifteen months later burst forth in the Declaration of Independence. No Revolutionary shrine has a greater appeal to Americans than this old edifice.

Richmond was the first city of the South in the rebellion against the rule of King George. It was a safe meeting place for those who could not tolerate interference by the King. After the war began the seat of government was transferred there from Williamsburg because the surrounding country was overrun by British troops. Williamsburg was never rehabilitated as a Capital.

Within the present Virginia State House, designed by Thomas Jefferson, are many relics linking the rule of Royalty with Democracy. Portraits of Colonial and State Governors adorn the walls of the legislative chambers. In the rotunda stands the life-sized marble Houdon statue of Washington, approved by the Gen-

eral eleven years before his death. It is the most definite likeness of the foremost founder of the Republic.

To one traveling along the highways of Virginia, names and places reveal the romantic touch of bygone days, and make the history of the Nation sound like fiction. Crumbling old buildings breathe the heroic exploits of yesterday. Villages, brooding in their garments of age, recount with dramatic accent stories that need only the conjuring of the imagination to make them glow again with epic possibilities. Along the tidewater country the name of Washington has been indelibly transcribed. He came upon the stage when stirring events, which turned the Colonies into a Nation, were happening. He remained to become a principal actor.

In these years before the Revolution Washington enjoyed wealth. He liked the luxuries of a home. He wanted those about him to have every comfort. But these advantages he would sacrifice rather than surrender his independence.

"It seems highly necessary that something should be done to maintain the liberty which we have derived from our ancestors," he had written to his old friend, George Mason of Alexandria, in 1769. "But the manner of doing it is the point in question. Arms should be the last resource."

As a man of means, with credit abroad, Washington ordered from the shops of England. There were no manufacturing establishments in America. None were permitted. Washington made out long orders for clothing, dresses, furniture, which he sent to English brokers. But when the tax was put on, he notified his London correspondent, Robert Cary and Company, to send



OLD ST JOHN'S CHURCH, RICHMOND



CRAIGIE HOUSE, CAMBRIDGE, MASS





no articles ordered upon which a tax was to be assessed. His principles overruled necessity.

"I have very heartily entered into an association not to import any article which now is, or hereafter shall be, taxed for this purpose until the said act or acts are repealed," he wrote in his instructions.

For five years Colonel Washington watched the boycott fail. Each day he grew stronger in the belief that an appeal to arms must be the final arbiter of the multiplying difficulties arising between the Colonies and England. When Governor Dunmore on May 24, 1774, dissolved the House of Burgesses because of its sympathy with the determined people of Boston who schemed to subvert the Boston Port Bill, he was almost a rebel against the rule of King George. Washington was now forty-two years of age. He looked older and he reasoned with the sagacity of an experienced man of sixty.

And when a man has a sense of values vivid enough to make him a rebel against the social order that has fathered him, he generally has enough courage to strike for a better order. Colonel Washington became one of a group of twenty-five members of the dissolved House of Burgesses who met at the Raleigh Tavern on May 31, a week after the Governor had ordered them home, and laid plans for future action. They were determined not to submit to such arbitrary rule. It was decided to call a Virginia Convention on August 1, to which every county in the Colony was to send representatives.

Among the people the fervor of rebellion was spreading like a contagion. On July 5 a Fairfax County gathering named Washington on a committee to draft reso-

lutions expressing the sentiment of the voters. During the summer the issue became more sharply defined. Many times Colonel Washington talked the whole subject over with George Mason—that unrecognized liberal leader who after a few years was to become renowned as the author of the Virginia Bill of Rights. Generally he took counsel with Mason on all important policies. Moreover, Mason had a genius for writing. With Washington, he outlined and must have written the resolutions which were adopted by the members of the Fairfax County convention meeting in Mason's home at Alexandria on July 18. Colonel Washington presided. He was sent as one of the representatives of the Virginia convention which was to meet at Williamsburg on August 1. He went with the Fairfax resolves in his pocket to guide his course. They contained the germ which flowered in the Declaration of Independence.

Sentiment in the Williamsburg assemblage had not reached the stage for war. The delegates spent six days considering the needs of the hour and then elected seven of its members—Peyton Randolph, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Bland, Benjamin Harrison, and Edmund Pendleton<sup>1</sup>—to attend the First Constitutional Convention of all the Colonies to be held at Philadelphia on September 5.

But the Williamsburg session did not send its delegates without instructions. A series of resolves was adopted explaining the unhappy state of the people “which began about the third year of the reign of his present Majesty.” In these resolutions the delegates complained of being “misrepresented,” and as ardent

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, Woodrow, *George Washington*, p 148.

in support of the king "in the legal exercise of all his just rights and prerogatives." The tone bore the flavor of the Fairfax resolves adopted two weeks earlier.

"We sincerely approve of a constitutional connection with Great Britain," continued the instructions, "and wish most ardently a return of that intercourse of affection and commercial connection that formerly united both countries; which can only be effected by a removal of those causes of discontent which have of late unhappily divided us. The power assumed by the British Parliament to bind Americans by their statutes, in all cases whatsoever, is unconstitutional, and the source of these unhappy differences."

Washington was now at the beginning of his career as a political leader outside of Virginia. Before leaving for the Philadelphia convention he wrote a letter, on August 24, 1774, to his friend, Bryan Fairfax, a member of the old Royalist family which had befriended him in his youth. He was clear that great policies were to be determined.

"I shall not undertake to say where the line between Great Britain and the Colonies should be drawn," he declared, "but I am clearly of opinion that one ought to be drawn, and our rights clearly ascertained. I could wish, I own, that the dispute had been left to posterity to determine, but the crisis is arrived when we must assert our rights or submit to every imposition that can be heaped upon us, till custom and use shall make us as tame and abject slaves, as the blacks we rule over with such arbitrary sway."

Washington went home to plan his sojourn to Philadelphia—a journey which introduced him into Inter-Colonial politics and soon placed him on the pedestal as

a national figure. These were busy days at Mount Vernon. The Fairfaxes who in 1773 had left Belvoir, their Colonial estate near Mount Vernon, to settle ancestral affairs in England, now notified Washington to sell their Virginia holdings. They were not to return. Washington attended the sale, and many articles of furniture now seen at Mount Vernon came from that public auction. He made plans for work on the plantation during the fall. He wrote a few letters to England and waited the coming of guests.

The night of August 30 was made memorable at Mount Vernon. Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton arrived that day, and George Mason came over from Gunston Hall for a conference.

"All the above gentlemen dined here; after which with Colonel Pendleton and Mr. Henry I set out on my journey to Philadelphia," wrote Washington in his diary of August 31, 1774.

"I hope you will all stand firm. I know George will," said Martha Washington as she bade her guests farewell, while colored grooms held the nervous horses at the West Mount Vernon entrance awaiting the departure.

What today is a four-hour trip to Philadelphia by automobile was then a five-day ride on horseback. George Washington and his friends arrived in Philadelphia on the evening before the convening of the Congress on September 5. Had it not been for the early arrival of John Adams and several other delegates, the first meeting would not have progressed so smoothly.

Even in the midst of decaying relics today, it is difficult to picture those days of glory and vivid life that have been dead and gone for more than a century

and a half. To one with a love of old romance there are places in Philadelphia which stimulate the adventurer along age-trodden by-paths.

The Philadelphia upon which Washington looked has little resemblance to the Philadelphia of today. The city had a population of less than 30,000. It was reached by stage-coach. It was a community unto itself. Every stranger on the streets was noticed. Every innovation attracted attention. Unlike those in most Colonial cities, Philadelphia streets were paved and lighted with gas, due to the efforts of Benjamin Franklin, its foremost citizen.

Colonial people were interested in their own affairs. The few newspapers they had were religiously read. The inhabitants knew the men of their times and they knew the leaders in other Colonies. They could not help but recognize as a stranger the pompous John Adams and his older cousin with determined face, Samuel Adams. They would recognize Colonel Washington, whose name was a household word, not only in the Colonies, but in England. They would point out Patrick Henry, whose treasonable speech in the House of Burgesses was on the lips of every patriot.

Hidden away from the thoroughfares of commerce in a Philadelphia byway is Carpenters' Hall where the first Colonial Congress assembled on the morning of September 5. Then it was one of the principal buildings in the city. Now its doorsill is deeply worn and its interior echoes to ghostly voices. The delegates marched there in a body. The sessions were secret and little of what transpired reached the public. Peyton Randolph of Virginia was elected President. Charles Thomson, a patriot of Philadelphia, was chosen Sec-

retary—a post he held through the various agencies of government until the Constitution was adopted. The roll call indicated that, of the fifty-three delegates chosen, forty-four were present. It was the first assemblage of representative America; its activities were the first breathings of Democracy.

There were many difficult problems before that convention. The smaller Colonies believed that each should have the same representation as the larger ones. It required great diplomacy to keep harmony. There was some spirit in the minds of these men difficult to define,—the voice of freedom rang in their ears. Other Colonies have been burdened with heavier taxes than were these. Other people have had more serious grievances calling for redress than these. There burned in the hearts of the delegates the first evidence of a democratic movement which within a century was to grow and bloom and spread its benevolence around the globe.

More than seven weeks were spent together. The convention lasted from September 5 to October 25. The delegates petitioned the King for redress from taxation; they talked over their differences and finally agreed to call a second Constitutional Convention to meet the spring following. The Colonists had assumed control of their own destinies. Great speeches were made at some of these sessions. Patrick Henry was often on his feet. Washington listened but took little active part. He was not even a member of a committee. But his hand was close to the helm. Patrick Henry pictured the convention in a single sentence.

“If you speak of eloquence, Mr. Rutledge of Virginia was the greatest man at that convention,” declared Patrick Henry; “but if you speak of a sound

judgment, Colonel Washington is undoubtedly the greatest man upon that floor."

The arrogance of England's ministry showed that no peace was to be had. No word of compromise came. Rhode Island, Virginia, and the Carolinas began the forming of military groups. Massachusetts Bay had long had an army organization. In December, 1774, the provincial convention of Maryland recommended that all persons between the ages of fifteen and fifty form themselves into military companies. In the early part of 1775, Colonel Washington was chosen as field officer of the independent organization of several companies of Virginia.

Fairfax County held another gathering on February 20, 1775. Again it sent Colonel Washington to attend the second meeting of the provincial assemblage, this time to be convened at Richmond, Virginia.

It is ninety miles from Mount Vernon to Richmond. I started by automobile one morning at Alexandria determined to travel the route Washington had gone on horseback more than a century and a half before, when he went to attend the convention. I fancied that he must have gone as far as Fredericksburg the first day, where he stopped to visit his mother, who still made her home on the farm near the outskirts. There I waited two hours visiting the Rising Sun Tavern, where Washington so often entertained his comrades. Finally I strolled around the yard of his sister Betty's home, for he must have gone to see her.

Then I was off to Richmond. Just on the outskirts of the business section stands St. John's Episcopal Church. Pilgrims who reverence historic associations understand the charm such a visit portends. Names of



great men rise to haunt with imperishable memories the very atmosphere. The edifice looks out on East Broad Street where the delegates arrived. Since then it has become one of the most precious relics of American history.

The whiteness of the church was dazzling in the noonday sun. It seems crowded by an acre of many graves, whose markings are old and dark and weather-stained. The land was donated in 1741 by William Byrd, an ancestor of Commander Richard E. Byrd of polar fame. The church is still used for services every Sunday.

In the box-like pews of this little church the delegates gathered on March 20 to discuss whether they should surrender their all or fight for their rights. When the last delayed representatives had arrived, the old bell in the steeple—now in the care of the Virginia Historical Society—called the representatives within.

George Washington, tall and concerned, came in from the churchyard, where he had been spending some time in conversational reunion with Albert Lewis and Thomas Nelson, who had been his companions in the war against the French and in the defense of Fort Mifflin. The radical views expressed by George Mason and Thomas Jefferson must have given concern to John Marshall, a delegate destined far in the future to guide the jurisprudence of the unborn nation. Patrick Henry took a seat close to the front of the gathering.

Sentiments expressed in the early discussion showed there were still people in the Colonies who believed that further overtures toward conciliation should be made.

Not Patrick Henry. He offered a substitute resolution for the arming of Virginia. Whether through jealousy of Henry or lack of understanding of the resolution, a storm of opposition arose.

The hour to induct Patrick Henry into the shrine of immortals had arrived.

"Henry arose with an unearthly fire burning in his eye," wrote an eye witness. "He commenced somewhat calmly, but the smothered excitement began more and more to play upon his features and thrill in the tones of his voice.

"The tendons of his neck stood out white and rigid, like whipcords. His voice rose louder and louder while the wall of the building and all within seemed to shake and rock in its tremendous vibrations. Finally his pale face and glaring eye became terrible to look upon. Men leaned forward in their seats, their heads strained forward, their faces pale and their eyes glaring, like the speaker's."

I was standing in the chancel when the sexton of the old church pointed to the pew where Henry had argued. It is marked by a bronze tablet, placed there in 1911. Before reaching it I passed the seat that Washington occupied. Standing on the spot, looking at the very walls and rafters that had resounded to the vibrations and echoes of his searching voice, I fancied I heard the shrill pleading of his words, deafening in the power and weight of their portentous doom.

"Is life so dear and peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me give me Liberty or give me Death!"

In stillness Patrick Henry sat down, his hearers still

entranced. Immediately the resolution was adopted. Virginia's leadership had been seared with the baptismal fire of patriotic resolve. The sanctuary dedicated to God had become a tabernacle of freedom.

George Washington went back to Mount Vernon. No record of that day's events is found in his diary. Three months later he was at the head of an army turning Patrick Henry's prophecy into reality. Despair and doubt and treason arose to oppose him. But he never faltered. He kept the pledge of allegiance made to a burning cause in the little white church at Richmond, and in the faith of that decision a Nation was born.

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Richmond, Virginia, is one hundred ten miles South of Washington. It is one of the most historic cities in the South. It was the Capital of the Confederacy, and is the Capital of the Commonwealth today. Historic shrines include: St. John's Church; John Marshall's Home; White House of the Confederacy; and the Capitol designed by Thomas Jefferson.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE GENERAL TAKES COMMAND

#### BOSTON

PILGRIMS hoping to recapture the deathless spirit of liberty breathed by fallen patriots into the life of the Union of States have turned the much-traveled highway from Boston through Lexington and Concord into the introductory gateway for all roads to the Revolution. A thrill of adventure lent by Paul Revere's galloping ride; an awe instilled by the evidence of supreme sacrifices made; a reverence implanted by the presence of martyrs' deeds; an esteem for glorious achievements won against heavy odds pervade the atmosphere all the way. Long after the pilgrimage was ended I found the stimulant memory of this historic past still haunting me.

The metal of the Revolutionary spirit was tested at Boston in the presence of a great leadership. No dross remained. Here the sagacity of George Washington as a Commander-in-Chief was revealed: the military strategy planned and executed by him to force the British retirement from Boston in 1776 was adopted by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1793 to compel the evacuation of Toulon.<sup>1</sup> One military genius patterns after another.

I followed Washington all the way from Mount Vernon to Cambridge, where he took command of the

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 110.

Continental Army. On the way he stopped many times, and so did I. So congested has the population become along the route he traveled that it is difficult to recapture the past and picture it even in the imagination. Country towns have become populous cities; dusty roads have been transformed into laned boulevards; horseback riders have been succeeded by racing lines of automobiles. But the lusty forces of modernism have left the countryside with the natural barriers upon which Washington relied for national defense.

Before leaving Mount Vernon on May 4, 1775, to attend as a delegate the sessions of the Second Continental Congress at Philadelphia, Washington received the news of the battle of Lexington and Concord, which occurred on April 19. Momentarily the tidings disturbed him. He seemed to ponder the prophecy, made in the old St. John's Church at Richmond one month before. "After all, we must fight," predicted Patrick Henry. The Colony of Massachusetts had been attacked by British Regulars on Lexington Green; the outbreak of the Revolution had come.<sup>1</sup>

Going to his closet, Washington put on his old Colonial uniform of blue and buff and went off to attend the meetings of the Congress, which convened in the State House, now Independence Hall, at Philadelphia, on May 10. He was the only delegate present not in civilian dress. Wealthy John Hancock of Boston, whose name looms large in popular history because of his bold handwriting, was selected President. John Adams assumed the role of floor leader. The principal business before the Congress was that of organizing for defense. Washington was appointed chairman of the

<sup>1</sup> Frothingham, Thomas G., *George Washington, Commander-In-Chief*, p. 39.

Committee on Military Affairs. An army must be put in the field; a Commander-in-Chief must be chosen.

A new Democracy stood on the shadowy threshold of the Convention Hall—waiting—hoping—ready to be called.

No room in America, not even the National Capitol, is invested with more patriotic associations. Within its high-ceilinged, white-paneled walls George Washington was named Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army; there the Declaration of Independence was debated and signed; and when the Confederacy of States faltered, George Washington returned again and as the presiding officer helped to frame the Constitution of the United States.

Around the table of the presiding officer, where John Hancock sat, I fancied I saw the delegates gather in conversation before order was called. In their solemn faces glowed a grim determination. Cool air came in from the open windows. One after another took their seats. While I looked about, attempting to identify the delegates from the various Colonies, I thought I heard the door close, the lock click, as they did. All seemed as quiet as if the Convention rules of secrecy were still in force. In the far corner near the library door sat George Washington, dressed as a soldier.

John Adams of Massachusetts arose. He came forward to face the Assembly. He complimented the Convention on its plan to adopt the troops at Boston as the Continental Army. It became necessary, he said, to select a Commander-in-Chief to lead. In Adams' address of nomination, George Washington saw his own reflection, and modestly withdrew. The moment was

dramatic. Delegates hung on his words as Adams proceeded. He proposed Washington as:

" . . . a gentleman whose skill and experience as an officer, whose independent fortune, great talents and excellent universal character would command the approbation of all America, and unite the cordial exertions of all the Colonies better than any other person in the Union."

There was no opposition. A unanimous vote followed. A load shifted, the convention immediately adjourned for the day.

On the morning following, June 16, Washington appeared and with characteristic modesty and poise accepted<sup>1</sup> the trust.

"Mr. President," he said, addressing the President of the Congress, John Hancock, "though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress from a consciousness that my abilities . . . may not be equal to the . . . trust . . . As to pay, sir, as no pecuniary consideration could have prompted me to accept this . . . I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my expenses . . . and that is all I desire."

Four days passed before the commission was signed by John Hancock and placed in Washington's hands. It was dated June 19, 1775. Two days before, unknown to Washington, the Battle of Bunker Hill had been fought. Before setting out for Cambridge, he wrote an affectionate letter to his wife. It is one of the most beautiful that came from his pen. He was loath to

<sup>1</sup> Sawyer, Joseph Dillaway, *Ibid*, p. 314; Thayer, William Roscoe, *Ibid*, p. 64; Ford, Worthington C, *Ibid*, II, pp. 477-481.

accept.<sup>1</sup> He would be happier with her at home than "seven times seven years on victorious battlefields:"

"Philadelphia,  
June 18, 1775.

"My Dearest:—

"You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years.

"But it has been a kind of destiny, that has thrown me upon this service. I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did, perceive, from the tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return.

"That was the case. It was utterly out of my power to refuse . . . without exposing my character to such censures, as would have reflected dishonor upon myself, and given pain to my friends. I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that providence, which has heretofore preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting but that I shall return safe to you in the fall.

"I shall feel no pain from the toil or the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone.

"As life is uncertain, I have got Col. Pendleton to

<sup>1</sup> One of two letters Washington wrote to his wife that escaped being burned after his death. For full text see Fitzpatrick, John C., *Washington Diaries*, 1748-1799, Vol. III, p. 293.



draft a will for me, which I will now enclose. . . .

"I am, with the most unfeigned regard, my dear Patsy,  
"Yours affectionately,  
"G. W."

Accompanied by the First City Troops of Philadelphia as an escort and attended by General Charles Lee and Philip Schuyler, Washington began his journey northward on horseback on June 23. Before they had ridden twenty miles a courier sent by Boston with dispatches for Congress telling of the Battle of Bunker Hill met them. The Colonists had lost four hundred ninety-five, including thirty prisoners, while the British had lost one thousand fifty-four.<sup>1</sup> A wave of patriotism was sweeping New England. Soon the other Colonies caught the spirit.

"Did the Militia fight?" Washington interrupted.

"They stood their ground bravely," came the response.

"Then the liberties of the country are safe," he rejoined, and drawing the reins of his horse proceeded on his way.

Stopping in New York only long enough to ascertain conditions, he left General Schuyler as military commander of that Colony. Then he went on by way of Springfield to Cambridge,<sup>2</sup> arriving there on July 2, amid scenes of rejoicing. For a fortnight before permanent headquarters could be assigned, he made his residence at the Wadsworth Mansion on Harvard Square, then the "President's house," now the office of the Harvard Alumni Association.<sup>3</sup> Here he first met

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> For map of journey to Boston, June 23 to July 2, 1775, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol I, p. 406.

<sup>3</sup> Ives, Mabel Lorenz, *Washington's Headquarters*, p. 13

these brave men who so valiantly defended Boston.

Next day, with the troops in review, unmounted under a stately elm on Cambridge Common while the artillery thundered and the drums beat, Washington drew his sword as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental armies. The day was bright. The scene radiated dignity. Impressively he bowed to the applause. The soldiers stood at attention.

Before he spoke there was a long pause. The older officers noted that dressed in military uniform Washington looked youthful. He had passed his forty-third birthday. His appearance was immaculate. In the tenseness of his face and the steely blue of his eyes, the soldiers who looked on read great determination. Turning to them he said:

"The Continental Congress, having now taken all the troops of the several Colonies, which have been raised, for the support and defense of the Liberties of America into their Pay and Service: They are now the Troops of the United Provinces of North America; and it is hoped that all Distinctions of Colonies will be laid aside; so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole, and the only contest be who shall render, on this great and trying occasion, the most essential Service to the great and common Cause in which we are all engaged."

Gone are many of the old landmarks associated with Washington in his siege of Boston. But the spirit of the occasion remains for those who seek it. The elm, under which he assumed command, collapsed of old age in 1923. On its site at a street corner,<sup>1</sup> from a circular

<sup>1</sup> At Garden and Mason Streets, Cambridge. Cambridge is that part of Metropolitan Boston north of the Charles River

tablet imbedded in the pavement, I copied these words:

HERE STOOD  
THE WASHINGTON ELM  
UNDER WHICH  
GEORGE WASHINGTON  
TOOK COMMAND OF  
THE AMERICAN ARMY  
JULY 3, 1775.

Within the vicinity I visited the Wadsworth house, used first by Washington as a headquarters; Christ Church, where often he attended services; and the Craigie-Longfellow home, which he used as headquarters until the withdrawal of the British troops in April, 1776.

I cannot describe the confusion of feelings which swept me as I approached the Craigie mansion,<sup>1</sup> probably the most famous Colonial home in New England. A green lawn stretches from the doorway to the banks of the river Charles. Two great pillars of white guard the entrance. A winding stairway of architectural elegance with "the old clock on the stairs" sweeps from the threshold to the second floor. Within its first floor rooms and especially before that wide open fireplace of the study, in consultation with his staff, the momentous problems of the Boston siege were settled by Washington; to its parlors just before Christmas in 1775 came Mrs. Washington to meet the ladies of the staff's officers and other invited guests; from the same windows, long after Washington was no more, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow gazed upon the world as he brought forth "The Village Blacksmith" and

<sup>1</sup> Comstock, Sarah, *Roads to the Revolution*, p. 107; Peixotto, Ernest, *A Revolutionary Pilgrimage*, p. 46, Ives, Mabel Lorenz, *Ibid*, p. 27, et seq.

other works of poetry and prose. It is a house of many memories.

"This cannon ball is from the Boston siege," said the caretaker as she showed me the historic mementoes of the mansion. I held it and wondered. The walls about me seemed venerable with age.

"Many legends of the house are associated with General Washington," the caretaker continued. "He liked to sit and ponder before the warm fire in the back study. Once as he sat here, bowed by his great responsibilities, it is said he remarked that he wished he had entered the ranks instead of as a Commander. Even when discouraged he enjoyed the wide windows of the rooms on the second floor occupied by Mrs. Washington and himself. They say he always appeared troubled when he lived here. Why? I do not know."

No General ever faced greater tasks than did Washington when he assumed command. He must create an army out of what he described as a "mixed multitude;" he must dress an army so there would be uniformity; he must introduce order and discipline where had been only confusion; he must find food, clothing and shelter for 20,000 men; he must outwit the profiteers; he must get guns and ammunition with which to fight; he must check the voluntary "walkout" of the men when they felt they wanted to return to their homes. In vain he appealed to the Congress for help.

"I know that much is expected of me," he wrote to Joseph Reed, former Secretary, in February, 1776. "I know that, without men, without arms, without ammunition, without anything fit for the accommodation of a soldier, little is to be done; and I know that I cannot stand justified to the world without exposing my own

weakness and injuring the cause. . . . My situation has been such that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers."

Washington tightened his grip around Boston. No food was allowed to enter. The British must fight or starve. He established a force of armed ships. He secured enlistments of Marblehead fishermen, whose skill in handling boats was later to save him on more than one occasion. He authorized an expedition under Robert Montgomery against Montreal and another under Benedict Arnold against Quebec.

Supplies came from an unexpected source. The Americans captured the British relief ship *Nancy* with its cargo of 2,000 muskets, 30,000 rounds of shot, 100,000 flints, and a 2,700-pound, thirteen-inch mortar. Reinforcements came from the South. Both were too late for the season's advance.

"Washington found himself face to face with the first of eight dreary winters, which he was to pass in cantonments, beleaguering British troops comfortably quartered in American cities," wrote one historian, who commented on the desolate situation which confronted the Commander.

During the winter Colonel Henry Knox was sent to Ticonderoga to build sleds. When the snow fell, cannon were torn from their placements and loaded. Oxen were hitched to the forty-two sleds, and the two hundred fifty-mile return journey began. Four miles a day were all that could be made. Spring was threatening when the cortege arrived at Cambridge with fifty-nine cannon weighing 124,000 pounds. A new hope was dawning.

With artillery, Washington on March 4 seized the

high grounds of Dorchester Heights and planted his cannon on the ramparts. Below was the harbor. An artillery fire would destroy all the docks and shipping. Unexpectedly the British had been trapped. Hastily they now withdrew.

Rushing in, the Americans recovered two hundred fifty British cannon of various calibre. On March 17, 1776, Washington took over Boston as the British under General William Howe with boatloads of Loyalists sailed away toward Halifax. The pent-up city burst into celebration. Harvard, oldest college in the Colonies, conferred upon Washington its highest honorary degree.<sup>1</sup> Congress awarded him a gold medal.

"Which do you like better, the Red Coats or the Provincials?" Washington asked of a little Boston girl on the day of his victory.

"The Red Coats," quickly responded the child.

"Ah! my dear," said Washington. "They look better, but they don't fight. The ragged fellows are the best for fighting."<sup>2</sup>

From Dorchester Heights I viewed the scene of Washington's coup. His had been a supreme stroke of military strategy. Today far out at sea is a broad lane of shipping; millions now live where the American soldiers billeted; in the haze, old North Church of Paul Revere's renown pricks the sky. If in the sweeping picture the earth and harbor could be made to yield their buried treasures and hidden secrets, we would have still more reason to pay highest homage to

<sup>1</sup> Other colleges to confer the same degree on Washington during his life were: Yale College, April 26, 1781, Pennsylvania College, July 4, 1783; Washington College, Chestertown, Md., June 24, 1789, and Brown College, September 2, 1790.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. III.

the genius of him who saved New England from British rule.

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Included within a radius of fifteen miles from the State House in Boston are forty-three cities and towns, independent politically but which share certain municipal benefits. Cambridge, the seat of Harvard University, and the site of several historic spots associated with General Washington, is one of these suburban centers.

Places of pre-Revolutionary War interest in Boston include: Christ Church (Old North Church), oldest church in Boston (1723), from whose belfry hung lanterns signaling Paul Revere that the British were marching to Lexington and Concord; Faneuil Hall, given to Boston as a town hall, 1742; Kings Chapel (1668); Old South Meeting House; Old State House; Park Street Church and Burial Ground, where are the graves of John Hancock, Robert Paine, Samuel Adams, Peter Faneuil, Paul Revere, and nine Governors; Paul Revere House, oldest home in the city, built about 1660; and the site of the Boston Tea Party, marked by a tablet.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE JORDAN OF AMERICAN LIBERTY

#### DELAWARE RIVER

EIGHT miles above Trenton a bridge of steel spans the turbulent waters of the Delaware River and connects the States of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Parks of green in Summer, with winding roads through vistas of flowers and shrubs, set off the entrance to the passageway on either side.

Here Washington and his bedraggled army, beset by storm and ice floes, crossed the river from Pennsylvania on Christmas night, 1776, and delivered a blow which restored hope to the patriots when all seemed lost. It was their first success after five months of fighting and retreating.

Today the place is known as Washington Crossing. Both states maintain beautiful memorial parks at the riverside entrances; both have improved highways leading there. Probably no battleground of the Revolution has so gripped the popular imagination, or become so well remembered for the story of the bitter sacrifices endured. On the Pennsylvania side is a statue of Washington as he appeared that night. Stern of face, arms folded, his tall form wrapped in a flowing coat, his head crowned with a three-cornered cocked hat, he serenely overlooks the broad river. At the base of the monument, a bronze relief depicts his harrowing



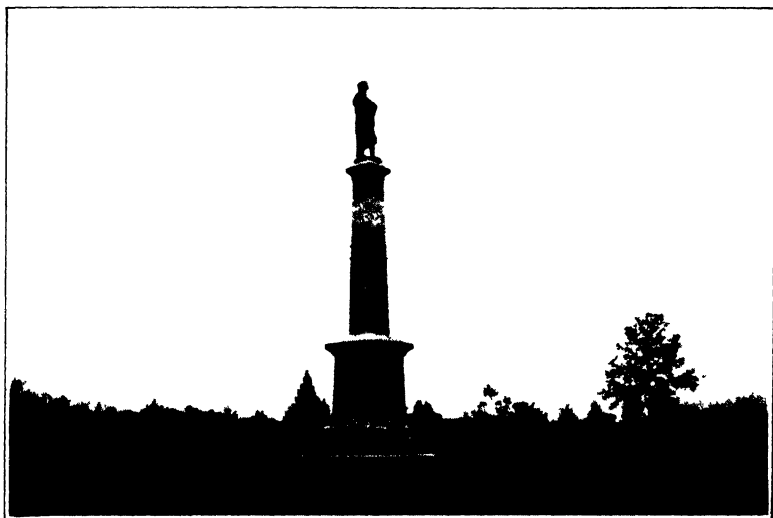
advance. Even this sculptured portrayal fails to capture the grim touch of the agonies suffered.

As I walked over the captivating grounds and stood at the riverside where the army had embarked, the strife of the world seemed to recede. As I paused on the spot where Washington had directed the loadings; viewed from the bridge the dark waters of the Delaware; recalled the sleet of the night and the dangers met in crossing the ice-filled river, a sense of homage swept me. What if the Marblehead fishermen who manned the frail boats had been less skilful? What if Washington had failed? In that dark hour he was the life spark of the Revolution. Just when he began to believe that "the game would be up," with mutinies and desertions on every side, one bold, quickly executed stroke directed by him turned the Delaware River into the Jordan of American Liberty.

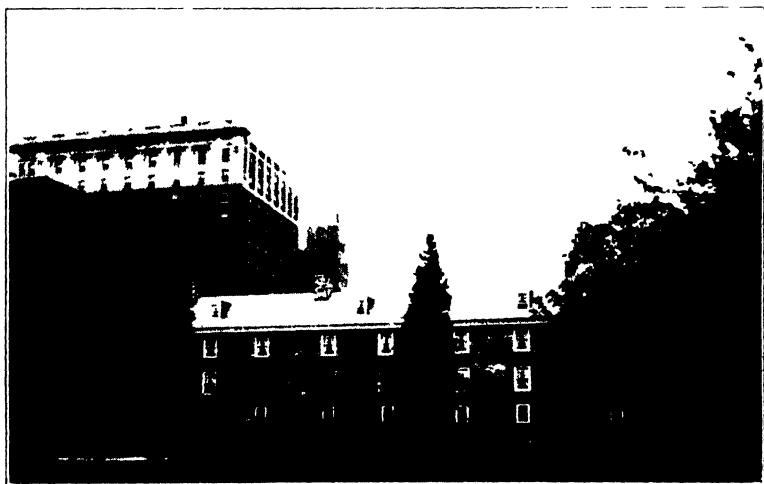
When I visited the scene at Washington Crossing, already I had been following for two days the general route of the retreating Continental Army during the five months which led there.<sup>1</sup> With the retirement of the British from Boston in March, 1776, General Washington foresaw that the next blow would be struck at New York. In anticipation months before he had sent General Charles Lee<sup>2</sup> there to prepare defenses. If the British could control the Hudson and the lake and waterways northward into Canada, New England would be dismembered and further co-operation with the other Colonies ended. Politically an effort must be made by Washington to hold New York.

<sup>1</sup> For map of Washington's Retreat, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 113; also *The George Washington Atlas*, United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Plate 36.

<sup>2</sup> No relative of the famous Lee family of Virginia.



WASHINGTON IN BRONZE- WHERE HE CROSSED THE DELAWARE



THE BARRACKS AT TRENTON, NEW JERSEY



Leaving a garrison of five regiments for the defense of Boston, Washington quit Cambridge on April 4 and hurriedly moved his troops through Providence, Norwich, and New London, arriving at New York on April 13.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Boston, New York was a Tory hotbed. The population of twenty thousand concentrated on the lower end of Manhattan Island, lent every aid to the British. Spies swarmed Washington's camps; Loyalists shadowed every movement of his officers. From an office on a man-of-war anchored in the harbor, Governor William Tryon, the last British Executive, carried on intrigues and conspired with Loyalists on shore.

While preparations for defense were under way, disheartening word came to Washington of the failure of the Canadian campaign under Montgomery and Arnold.<sup>2</sup> Montgomery had fallen while attempting to scale the heights at Quebec.<sup>3</sup>

Now gloom invaded Washington's ranks; desertions became daily occurrences; treason stalked his camps. In June, Tories conspired to kidnap Washington. The discovery of the plot resulted in the execution of Thomas Hickey, a member of Washington's guard. On June 28, 1776, Washington publicly announced:

"The unhappy Fate of Thomas Hickey, executed this day of Mutiny, Sedition and Treachery; the General hopes will be a warning to every Soldier, in the

<sup>1</sup> Frothingham, Thomas G., *Ibid*, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Lodge, Henry Cabot, *The Story of the Revolution*, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> The spot on Cape Diamond where he fell is marked by a tablet bearing the inscription "MONTGOMERY FELL, DEC'R 31, 1775." His body was brought back to New York for burial in old St. Paul's on Broadway, July 8, 1818. Congress erected a monument. See Peixotto, Ernest, *A Revolutionary Pilgrimage*, p. 151.

Army, to avoid those crimes and all others, so disgraceful to the character of a soldier and pernicious to his country, whose pay he receives and Bread he eats.”<sup>1</sup>

Prompt action put an end to the conspiracies. While Washington awaited the anticipated arrival of the British troops his hope successfully of holding the city with his fifteen thousand ragged soldiers paled. To withdraw his weak and untrained army would signal the collapse of the Revolution. He had no alternative. He must fight.

Finally, on June 29, Washington's premonition was fulfilled. The arrival of boatloads of British forces under General William Howe began. One hundred thirty ships were to drop anchor. Quarters for the soldiers were established on Staten Island. With them came thousands of Hessians from Germany, hired to fight the battles for England. Lord Cornwallis returned with his army from the South. The navy under Lord Admiral Richard Howe, a brother of the General, anchored in New York harbor on August 2. A concentrated drive of thirty thousand faced Washington.

While the Colonial commander nervously awaited an attack, Congress sitting at Philadelphia deliberately closed the door to further mediation. A pamphlet entitled “Common Sense,” written by Thomas Paine, stirred the people to the justice of their demands. Separate governments were being set up by the Colonies. One after another wheeled into line for independence. Washington sent Congress a letter that Howe had arrived at the door of New York. It was read; then the

<sup>1</sup> *News Releases Relating to the Life and Time of George Washington*, United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Vol. I, p. 235

debate for separation continued. On July 4, the Declaration of Independence was adopted in the same hall where Washington had been commissioned. Twelve Colonies voted unanimously for Independence, thirteen agreed to it. Five days later the Declaration was received by Washington in New York. At six o'clock that evening the regiments were paraded and the document read to them. The soldiers warmly approved. It put into words the ideals for which they were fighting. It echoed the public opinion of the hour. The Colonies were now a Nation.<sup>1</sup>

At last the British were ready. During four days following August 22, upwards of twenty thousand British soldiers, with numerous pieces of cannon, were landed on Long Island and moved close to the American lines. Washington steeled his men for the battle with these words:

"The enemy have now landed on Long Island, and the hour is fast approaching on which the honor and success of this army and the safety of our bleeding country depend. Remember, officers and soldiers, that you are freemen fighting for the blessings of liberty—that slavery will be your portion, and that of your posterity, if you do not acquit yourselves like men."

Washington's army of fourteen thousand, fit for duty, was divided into two parts. The half which faced Howe was in Brooklyn where General Nathaniel Greene had all Summer been fortifying the heights. It stretched nearly a mile from Gowanus Cove to Wallabout Bay. The other force on Manhattan Island was separated from Greene's division by the East River, half a mile wide.

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, Henry Cabot, *Ibid*, p. 168.

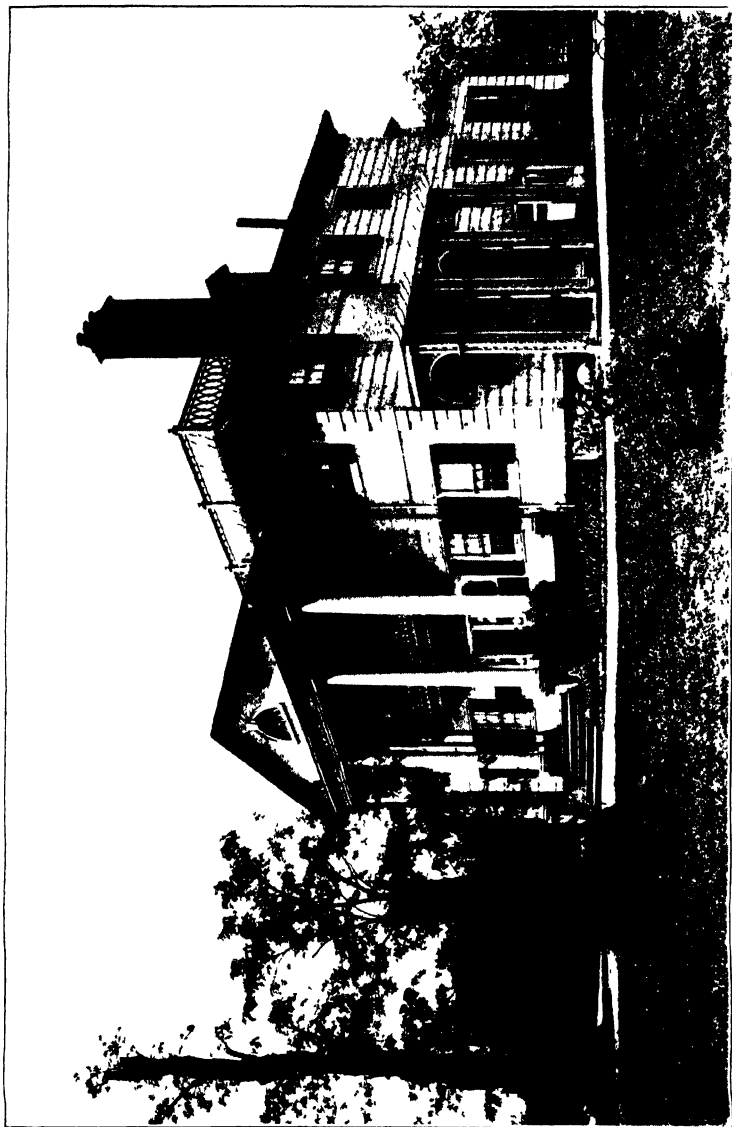
General Howe opened his attack on August 27. He easily turned the American left end. Washington arrived in time to assist in reorganizing the front. The Americans lost about one thousand. Then the British attack suddenly ended for the day. The lull probably saved the American Army from annihilation. That night Washington brought more troops from Manhattan. Rains drenched the land. The earth became soggy. On the next day still more rains. Torrents descended. Roads turned slippery. A heavy fog drifted in to hide the landscape. Everything was submerged. Then Washington changed his plans. With a mire under foot and a river at his back, he saw that he was in a trap. There was still time to escape.

Under the blanket of mists Washington led a retreat across East River. Skilfully the Marblehead fishermen transported the nine thousand men with their military stores to New York. When the veil lifted in the morning the British discovered that the enemy had decamped.

"This retreat has always been regarded as one of the most brilliant incidents in Washington's career," writes John Fiske, probably the ablest historian of the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

More time was now wasted by Admiral Howe. He wanted to make terms with the Colonies. He sent a letter to Washington, addressing him as a civilian, without military recognition. The letter could not be received. Howe also asked Congress to appoint commissioners to discuss affairs. Franklin headed the group. At the first meeting both sides found the terms of the other impossible of consideration. The British

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, John, *The American Revolution*, Vol. I, p. 211.



JUMEL MANSION, NEW YORK

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could not recognize the independence of the Colonies.<sup>1</sup> So the war went on.

Under the cover of fire laid down by British war ships, Clinton's Red Coats were landed from the East River on Manhattan Island on September 15. On the day following, Washington's army drove the enemy down the island over a mile. Meantime General Washington took up his quarters in the Jumel Mansion,<sup>2</sup> forsaken by his old sweetheart, Mary Philipse, and her Tory husband, Roger Morris, who fled to England.

Over a community of apartments and crowded streets, Jumel Mansion still lifts its honored, aristocratic head. Within its wide halls I held communion with the generals of a great past—Sullivan, Greene, Lee, and Washington. Officers in gray and blue awaited in the corridors. The large frame building of white, with great pillars and a second story veranda, has had a colorful existence. In the spacious drawing rooms he counseled with his officers. Mementoes of the Revolution hang from the walls; furniture and old maps are in places where Washington used them; a pair of Hessian andirons rests in the fireplace, now cold. Long after the War the house became the home of Aaron Burr. What a shrine, where plans and plots and finally dark secrets are sealed forever within untalkative walls! It is a proud landmark of historic distinction, one of many sites where Washington paused as he traveled his way toward military renown.

Scarcely a month was passed by Washington at

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, W. E., *Ibid.*, p. 315

<sup>2</sup> At 160th Street, near Amsterdam Avenue, New York.

Jumel Mansion before departure became necessary. On October 9 the British frigates ran Forts Lee and Washington which guarded the Hudson River from both sides. This threatened the safety of the army. Washington quickly evacuated Harlem Heights and moved his army to White Plains. Howe followed him. His attack on October 28 found Washington too well entrenched. After several days of waiting, the dismayed British General turned his back on White Plains and returned to Manhattan. He would bait Washington.

Now began the long trek of Washington's army which ended in his hurried retreat through New Jersey to the protection beyond the waters of the Delaware. Army lines shifted daily. After Howe's withdrawal, Washington moved to the vicinity of Hackensack, west of the Hudson River. New York was now in full control of the British. One American fort on the East side of the Hudson held out. On November 16 Washington witnessed Howe's capture of Fort Washington, with a force five times larger than those who defended it. From the redoubts of Fort Lee<sup>1</sup> on the New Jersey shore he watched, in bitter tears, the Hessians butcher his soldiers; capture three thousand of his men with immense supplies.<sup>2</sup> No blow of the war was more keenly felt. But Washington could not be blamed. A month before, he had ordered the fort evacuated. Congress had overridden his command. To Congress he now reported:

"The loss of such a number of officers and men,

<sup>1</sup> The entrances of George Washington Memorial Bridge, largest structure of its kind in the world, connecting New Jersey with New York at about 180th Street, are on the sites of Fort Lee and Fort Washington.

<sup>2</sup> Comstock, Sarah, *Ibid*, p. 160.

many of whom have been trained with more than usual attention, will, I fear, be severely felt; but when that of the arms and accoutrements is added, much more so; and must be a further incentive to procure as considerable a supply as possible for the new troops, as soon as it can be done."

I visited the grassy parkway scenes which have since risen over the ramparts of Fort Washington. A stone bench, close to a cannon used in defense of the fortification, bears this inscription:

THIS MEMORIAL MARKS THE SITE OF FORT WASHINGTON, CONSTRUCTED BY THE CONTINENTAL TROOPS IN THE SUMMER OF 1776 TAKEN BY THE BRITISH AFTER A HEROIC DEFENSE NOVEMBER 16, 1776 REPOSSESSED BY THE AMERICANS UPON THEIR TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO THE CITY OF NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 25, 1783.

Farther North along the parkway I came upon the first tribute found along the way to a woman defender:

ON THIS HILLTOP STOOD FORT TRYON, THE NORTHERN OUTWORK OF FORT WASHINGTON ITS GALLANT DEFENSE AGAINST THE HESSIAN TROOPS BY THE MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA REGIMENT, THE 16TH OF NOVEMBER, 1776, WAS SHARED BY MARGARET CORBIN, THE FIRST AMERICAN WOMAN TO TAKE A SOLDIER'S PART IN THE WAR FOR LIBERTY.

"Who was Margaret Corbin?"

I asked that question many times of those in the park before receiving a definite answer. In the attack on Fort Washington she saw her husband fall. Seizing his gun she rushed into the battle to take his place. Her bravery is remembered by a tablet in nearby Holy Rood Church. Tardy recognition by the Government came in 1927 when her remains were reinterred at West Point with military honors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Comstock, Sarah, *Ibid*, p. 161

With the loss of so many soldiers, Washington now realized how precarious his position had become. He had less than six thousand men. On November 17, he ordered General Lee with the northern division to join him. As Washington retreated across New Jersey his army melted with desertions and the lapse of enlistments. Once more he urged Lee to hasten. On December 2, with less than three thousand ragged soldiers, Washington passed through Princeton. The British under Lord Cornwallis closely dogged their heels. Gathering all boats for seventy miles he crossed the Delaware River on December 8. Without boats the enemy could not follow. Again the British had been outwitted.

Then Washington rested. Congress in a panic deserted Philadelphia on December 12 and fled to Baltimore after conferring the powers of a dictator upon Washington.<sup>1</sup> Came news that must have made him smile. The insubordinate Lee had been captured in his night clothes by British dragoons. General Sullivan joined Washington on December 20 with Lee's troops.<sup>2</sup>

The danger period of the Revolution had arrived, with the storms which visited the camps in December. Near discouragement, Washington wrote his brother that "the game is pretty near up," and gave as the cause of probable failure the short period of army enlistments permitted by Congress.<sup>3</sup> Believing the war almost over, General Howe returned to the comforts of

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Holmes, M. D., *Ibid*, pp. 179-183; Lodge, Henry Cabot, *Ibid*, p. 205; Frothingham, Thomas G., *Ibid*, p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Letter printed in Thayer, *Ibid*, p. 85.

life and his mistress in New York;<sup>1</sup> Cornwallis awaited passage to England; the Hessians under Colonel Rahl at Trenton caroused and held the border. At last the British felt they had reason to celebrate a glorious Christmas.

Washington also surmised that they would celebrate. Secretly he planned three attacks for Christmas night when he ratiocinated their discipline would relax. Two divisions under Generals Ewing and Cadwalader were to cross below at Trenton Ferry and Bordentown. Washington would cross with twenty-four hundred at McKonkey's Ferry, eight miles north of Trenton.

Leaving the old McKonkey Ferry house, on the New Jersey shore at Washington Crossing, where the General hurriedly breakfasted on the morning after the troops were landed, I followed down the road his soldiers had traveled. Two columns under Greene and Sullivan entered Trenton from the North by different roads.

Closing my eyes to the present, in imagination I saw along the way the blood-stains of Washington's shoeless men imprinted in the snow; felt the cold chill of the night which froze to death two of his soldiers; witnessed the bayonet charge at the barracks and the quick surrender of more than a thousand Hessians. Of the four Americans wounded, Lieutenant James Monroe, later President of the United States, was one.

The old stone barracks still stand on the grounds adjacent to the state capitol. I entered. Recently the barracks have been restored. As if left there in haste to enter the battle, the guns of departed Hessians stand in the corners where stocked; their mess tables await

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, W. E., pp. 324-325.

the call for the after-Christmas day breakfast, which was never announced.

Washington's converging columns entered Trenton in the morning just as the sun was coloring the Eastern horizon. The Hessian guards shouted guttural alarm, but the Christmas revelers were too tired to realize the danger. Colonel Rahl, half dressed, dashed for his horse. He was mortally wounded while attempting to organize his men.<sup>1</sup> Panic-stricken by the suddenness of the unexpected attack, they dashed about wildly. After only a few minutes of fighting, the Hessians surrendered,<sup>2</sup>—twenty-two were dead, nearly a thousand threw down their arms.

Horseback riders carried the news to North and South. The appearance of the Hessian prisoners, marching through the streets of Philadelphia, electrified the country. The dramatics of the Trenton attack has never been equalled—not even by the dashing ride of General Philip Sheridan in the Civil War. Again bright hopes of victorious Independence crowded gloom into the shadows. The British Generals in New York were stunned. Cornwallis was ordered to the scene.

Meantime Washington led his triumphant army across the Delaware for a few days' rest. There he saw another opportunity. By New Year's he marched back through Trenton to encamp on the hills along the South side of the Assanpink Creek. Recruits were coming,—joining rapidly. The New Jersey farmers became sympathetic and furnished supplies. On the

<sup>1</sup> Buried in cemetery of First Presbyterian Church, Trenton.

<sup>2</sup> The captured Hessians were later taken to a prison camp at Winchester, Va. Many of the long stone walls standing in that vicinity were built by them as were the cobbled pavements at Alexandria, Va.

evening of January 2, 1777, Cornwallis with an army of seven thousand came up and opened an immediate attack. Confident that he "would bag the old fox in the morning," the British General ordered firing to cease at nightfall.

Again Washington played decoy. Leaving men to keep his camp fires blazing all night, he stole away with his army. The astonished British awoke on January 3 to the sound of firing at Princeton. "The old fox" had escaped. Another astonishing victory had unexpectedly been registered. In two sharp actions of twenty minutes Washington had defeated the British; two hundred fifty prisoners had been taken. Riding his white horse into the open he assumed personal command. There was no flinching. General Hugh Mercer, his old friend from Fredericksburg, fell mortally wounded. So long as military acuteness is venerated the day will be imperishable in history.

Not far from old Nassau Hall, often used by the Continental Congress as a meeting place, at a triangle of streets entering the famous university city, there stands a huge monolith on which the Princeton battle scene has been carved. The terrible onrush is poignantly recorded as the determined soldiers crush by Washington who leads on horseback. Half a mile away a heap of cannon ball marks the spot where the battle raged and the brave Mercer fell. Today a circle of cedars stands guardian around the spot where the march of his great spirit halted. Near it stands the house of Thomas Clark in which he died.<sup>1</sup>

An hour after the battle Washington found most of

<sup>1</sup> Mercer lingered until January 12, 1777. He is buried in Philadelphia. A life-size statue of him stands on a boulevard in Fredericksburg, Va., his old home, and where his apothecary shop is a museum.



his soldiers already asleep on the ground. They were dead from exhaustion;—no use pushing on for other victories. He ordered a march behind the New Jersey hills and went into winter quarters at Morristown. Within two weeks an apparently “lost cause” was retrieved; a new Nation saved from annihilation. Over in France LaFayette heard the news of Washington’s victories. Enthused, he hastened to America to offer his personal aid and his fortune.

Frederick the Great considered the campaign in New Jersey as “the outstanding exploit of the century,” and Lord Cornwallis, after his surrender at Yorktown, told General Washington that “Fame will gather your brightest laurels on the banks of the Delaware.”<sup>1</sup>

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Washington Crossing is eight miles north of Trenton, the capital of New Jersey. From the Pennsylvania side the Crossing is reached by Highway No. 632. A monument in Trenton commemorates Washington’s capture of the Hessian troops. The barracks, built by the British in 1759 for use in the French and Indian War and later occupied by the Hessians, is a museum.

Ten miles Northeast of Trenton is Princeton, the home of Princeton University since 1756. Both British and Continental soldiers occupied its buildings at different times during the War. Nassau Hall, oldest college building, was used on several occasions as a meeting place for the Continental Congress. Here Washington received the thanks of the Congress for establishing the Independence of the United States.

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 12.

## CHAPTER XII

### EXTINGUISHED CAMP FIRES

#### VALLEY FORGE

EACH hour of the day the Chimes of the Colonies ring out the silver tones of some sacred hymn over the deserted parade grounds of Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. The mingled sounds of the bells, each named for one of the states, are the unending requiem of a Nation for the thousands of soldier dead who sleep in unknown martyrs' graves under the plushy green of the valley and hillside.

Valley Forge is the Golgotha of the Revolutionary War. Today Nature has hidden its tragic story of starvation and nakedness, disease and neglect, despair and treachery, under a pleasing covering of park foliage.<sup>1</sup> Echoed dirges have been drowned by the songs of innumerable birds. The solemn knell from the hill above the valley is a discerning voice which stirs the imagination to a recollection of the narrative of appalling sufferings and sacrifices here endured to dedicate a Nation. Every hour the bells vibrate a reverential message of remembrance.

The route which took Washington to Valley Forge

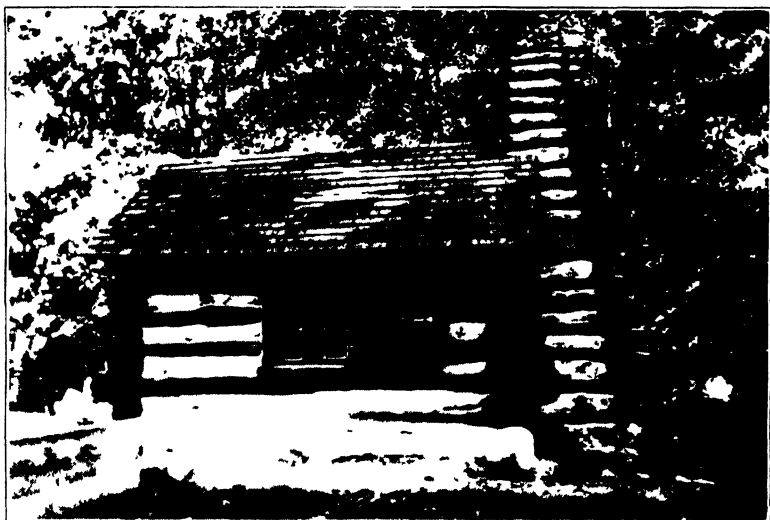
<sup>1</sup> Created as a public park by Pennsylvania in 1893, and administered by the State through the Valley Forge Park Commission. It embraces 1,500 acres, the major part of the area occupied by the troops. The Washington Memorial Chapel, above the valley, owes its existence to the enterprise of the Rev W. Herbert Burk. When completed, several buildings will comprise this group. The architecture and stained glass windows of red, white, and blue are unique and fitting for "The Shrine of the Nation."

leads through many byways and over fields where brave men fell.<sup>1</sup> When he went into winter quarters at Morristown, New Jersey, on January 7, 1777, after the smashing victories of Trenton and Princeton, he had planned to rest his tired army for only a few days. Months passed, however, before he broke camp on May 28. Meantime a new Continental Army has been raised and organized.

British officers in America had nothing to say about their plan of campaigns. The whole scheme of attack on the Colonies was laid down in detail on paper by the War Office in London and sent to their field generals to follow undeviatingly. A part of their summer plan of attack had become known to Washington. Seditious New England would be split off from the other Colonies and afterwards dealt with separately. General John Burgoyne was to lead an army down from Canada, take Ticonderoga, and then advance along the line of the Hudson. At Albany he would meet two other forces. One under Colonel St. Leger would approach from the West coming down the Mohawk Valley; the second under General Howe would come up the Hudson from New York. Their meeting would sever New England and end the war.

A blunder in the British war office ruined the plan. General Howe was furnished the information about the advances to be made by the two others. No instruction as to his own participation was ever received. Believing the capture of the "Capital of the Rebels" at Philadelphia the one important thing to bring about, he set out to accomplish it. Such a plan of operation

<sup>1</sup> Detailed map of route, *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 417, Plate 37.



RESTORED SOLDIERS' HUT, VALLEY FORGE



HEWES HOUSE, VALLEY FORGE



had previously been approved by the ministry,<sup>1</sup> and no change of instructions had been received.

Washington sensed that the British Canadian Wilderness Campaign would fail. The long tangled miasma fastness would ensnare any army. Arnold and Morgan, two of his best generals, were detached to aid General Horatio Gates, who had charge of the Northern division which must meet and oppose Burgoyne. That done, Washington turned his personal attention to Howe.

Anticipating that the British would again try to take Philadelphia by land as Howe had attempted the fall before, Washington moved his army of eight thousand men on May 28 to the heights of Middlebrook, seven miles from the British Camp at New Brunswick. His camp surveyed the main highway between New York and Philadelphia. For eighteen days Howe marched and counter-marched, employing every tactic to lure the satisfied Washington from his strategic position. Afraid that Washington would flank him if he attempted to proceed by land, the disappointed Howe, on June 30, returned to his boats and Staten Island.

That strange maneuver convinced Washington that Howe was about to move up the Hudson to join Burgoyne who had already started South through the Canadian wilderness with a second British Army of eight thousand. The mystery increased, however, when Howe unexpectedly put to sea on July 23. Washington was bewildered. Days went by without word. Then on July 30, he learned that Howe had been sighted off the Delaware Capes, but had again vanished. No longer

<sup>1</sup> Van Tyne, Claude H., *The American Revolution (The American Nation: A History Series)*, p. 162.

was Howe's object a secret. Washington divined that Philadelphia was the coveted prize.

Now Washington could make his plans. On August 2, he moved his army to the neighborhood of Philadelphia, where he awaited news of Howe's disembarkation. While he rested, Howe entered the Chesapeake, and on August 25 landed his fourteen thousand troops at Elkton, Maryland, the extreme North end of the bay.

Washington gathered his forces of about twelve thousand and marched South, to oppose the British advance,<sup>1</sup> his jubilant soldiers wearing sprigs of green in their hats. At his side as Washington rode through Philadelphia for the front was a youthful zealot of whom America would soon be proud. The Marquis de LaFayette, scarcely twenty, had arrived from France. To him, Washington was a hero. To America, LaFayette was soon to be hailed as one of those rare souls who appear out of darkness in an hour of distress to fight for a good cause and shed glory as did the Knights of old.

"The moment I knew America was fighting for freedom, I burnt with a desire of fighting for her," LaFayette wrote the President of the Congress.

Named a Major General, without salary and without command, but attached to Washington's staff, LaFayette so endeared himself to the army that three years later he was graciously accorded the honor of leading the attack which ended in the surrender of the British at Yorktown.

When Washington reached the East banks of the Brandywine on September 9, he halted his army and

<sup>1</sup> Frothingham, Thomas G., *Ibid*, p. 209

prepared to block the British march to Philadelphia.

"How do I find the scenes of the Brandywine battlefield?" I asked a young farm lad on the road near Chadd's Ford.

"Just keep on going; it's everywhere here," he responded, and then suddenly plodded off without further explanation.

No scene of a battlefield of the Revolution has been less disturbed.<sup>1</sup> That is why I did not recognize it at once. I followed Washington a short distance to Chadd's Ford, one of the crossing places on the Brandywine, where the General had established his headquarters. LaFayette's were on the rugged hill above the ford where the dilapidated house still stands as a war landmark.

The whole Brandywine area remains a retreat of sylvan calm. The placid waters of the river glide through shady forests, veer close to overhanging trees, weave and turn around cool nooks, and loaf breathlessly along in the noonday glare through rich meadowlands on their way to join the Delaware at Wilmington. For a spot so famous in the annals of war history, it has suffered from destructive rehabilitation the least of any of the battlefields I visited. Washington's messengers lost their way along its devious roads. Fortunately I was lost more than once. In touring the side-roads to find my way out, I came upon every scene of battle and bivouac of Washington's army.

During the battle Washington commanded the center at Chadd's Ford, which blocked a direct road to Philadelphia. On the hills behind, Greene's division

<sup>1</sup> This Chapter has been read and authenticated by Dr. Joseph S. Evans, Chief of Staff, Wisconsin General Hospital, Madison, Wis., who was born and spent his boyhood amid the Brandywine scenes.



was held as a reserve. On the left, where the Brandywine flows into rapids, Armstrong's men were placed. Sullivan commanded three divisions on the right of Washington. The arrangement of men and grounds neared strategic perfection.

Early in the morning of September 11, Howe advanced. The Hessians under Knyphausen attacked the center at Chadd's Ford, while undiscovered Cornwallis' division filed around the back, forded the Brandywine six miles above,<sup>1</sup> and began to approach the rear of Washington's army along the old Lancaster Pike. Soon he was to meet with the same success this encircling movement had met when used against the same Sullivan at Long Island.

"So unobservant were Washington's officers that only by mere chance did he gain accurate information that Cornwallis' turning movement was not merely in progress but actually accomplished," wrote a British observer in his account of the battle.<sup>2</sup>

On my way following the route of retreat, I found tablets outlining the line of defense of the American army; saw, by the roadside, a shaft which marked the spot where LaFayette was wounded, and came to the old drab stone Birmingham Meeting House used by the Quakers as a hospital for wounded soldiers. There is something engaging about a visit to a battle scene where the land lays undisturbed as if the contest had recently occurred.

It was then a scene of shattered hopes; now orchards of grape and apples, fields of hay and grain cover the lands where the final stand took place. So peacefully

<sup>1</sup> Jeffry's Ford. A sign at the crossing reads: "Here Cornwallis crossed between one and two o'clock P. M., September 11, 1777."

<sup>2</sup> Frothingham, Thomas G., *Ibid.*, p. 215.

abounds the scene of rural contentment that the colorful war picture of the immortal spot began to fade in my memory.

Exhausted, Washington made no report to Congress that night. His army had suffered a loss of one thousand two hundred; the British reported a loss of five hundred seventy-five. The way was now open for Howe to enter Philadelphia. Congress fled in a panic to Lancaster and later moved to York for greater safety. The power of a dictator was again conferred upon Washington. Another crisis had arisen. On September 26 General Howe entered Philadelphia unopposed and took up his winter quarters. Seldom has a conquering general been more royally welcomed and more lavishly entertained.

Returning to Pennypacker's Mill, Washington planned a new attack. While the British reveled in entertainment he hoped to destroy their army at Germantown. Had it not been for a fog, his drive on October 4 would have been successful. The American loss was six hundred seventy-two; the British five hundred thirty-seven. The reverse gave no discouragement to the American Army, which was fast learning how to fight. Congress struck in Washington's honor a medal for his "wise and concentrated attack."

Germantown, since swallowed up in a greater Philadelphia, still echoes to the din of Washington's surprise. Where the old market square once stood and the battle once raged, the State of Pennsylvania has raised a monument. On one side, the Washington crescent shaped plan of battle has been etched; on the other, this stirring paragraph from his report to Congress is recorded:

"Upon the whole it may be said that the day was unfortunate rather than injurious. We sustained no material loss. . . .

"The enemy are nothing the better by the event and our troops, who are not in the least disappointed by it, have gained what all young troops gain by being in action."

Revolutionary houses in Germantown are undisturbed. At the upper end of the narrow, unchanged street stands the Chew House, called Cliveden, the citadel around which centered the musketry.<sup>1</sup> Bullet-scarred lions guard the doorway. The fortress-like, outer stone walls are old and gray, here and there splintered or pock-marked by artillery fire. The house screened the British from the withering furore of attack until Howe arrived with reinforcements. Trees on the lawn reflect great age. The house reminded me of a royal dignitary in retirement, standing serene, surrounded by old friends—the Billmeyer House where Washington directed the Battle, the Dunkard Church held by the British, and the old Concord Schoolhouse. It is a community of calm distinction. Little change has come in a century and none seems welcome. Washington and his soldiers have withdrawn. That's about all.

While Washington awaited at White Marsh for a retaliatory move from Howe, a courier came out of the North bearing good news. Burgoyne had surrendered his entire army to General Gates at Saratoga on October 17. By the terms, the British Army was to march out with honors and go under guard to Boston for embarkation to England.<sup>2</sup> It was the greatest victory of

<sup>1</sup> Peixotto, Ernest, *Ibid*, pp. 233-235.

<sup>2</sup> Van Tyne, Claude H., *Ibid*, p. 173.

the war. When France learned of it, she became our ally. In the eclat of rejoicing, Washington saw his own leadership challenged. Gates was the hero of the hour. Small men, envious leaders, and some designing members of Congress stupidly connived to humiliate their commander. He was becoming too popular. The British propaganda department published a sheaf of discreditable letters attributed to Washington. All were wicked forgeries.<sup>1</sup> A state dinner at York failed to toast Washington until reproved by LaFayette for the inconsiderate remissness.

Nor were these the only troubles which beset Washington to test his greatness during this dark period. Gates had grown vainglorious with victory. Over the cups he showed a friend a letter he had received from Brigadier General Thomas Conway, an officer who had enlisted from the French Army. Remembering its wording, that friend told Washington, who promptly wrote Conway:

“November 9, 1777.

“Sir: In a letter from General Conway to General Gates he says, ‘Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak General and bad counsellors would have ruined it.’

“I am, sir, your humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

That expose, followed by many explanations of the intriguers, is known in history as the “Conway Cabal.” It ended in oblivion for Conway and put Gates into his paper niche.” Washington’s influence among the peo-

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, W. E., *Ibid*, p. 333, Fitzpatrick, John C., *The Washington Slanders, George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, pp. 314-319.

<sup>2</sup> Fiske, John, *Ibid*, pp. 38-49

ple was strengthened. But neither popularity nor prestige would feed a famished army.

Congress denied Washington's request for permission to move the troops to Wilmington. Thereupon he marched his ragged Continentals twenty-three miles northwest from Philadelphia and on December 19 went into winter camp on the bleak hills of Valley Forge.

When I went there for a visit, I took with me a copy of Washington's letter to the President of the Congress, sent on December 23, 1777.<sup>1</sup> From an even tempered man like Washington, it was a damning indictment of the way Congress handled affairs. The organization of supplies had broken down because of Congressional interference and inefficiency; men must sit up all night because there were no blankets to cover them; many were obliged to sleep on the bare earth because no straw was provided; few had more than one shirt and some none at all; the army was without sufficient food; soldiers grew mutinous with hunger; as days passed the men became more destitute. Heavy snows descended to increase their miseries.

"No man, in my opinion, ever had his measures more impeded than I have by every department of the army," wrote Washington as a rebuke to Congress and the commissary under its control. "Unless some great and capital change suddenly takes in that line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things: starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Complete letter reprinted, *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, pp. 451-452.

"A number of men are confined in hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farm houses for the same account. We have by a field return this day made, no less than two thousand eight hundred ninety-eight men now in camp unfit for duty because they are barefoot and otherwise naked."

Horses died of starvation; men hitched themselves to the cannon to wheel them into place; blood-stained footprints marked the snows; some men had feet frozen so badly that the limbs turned black, requiring amputation.

Meantime the "higher ups" of Congress sat in comfortable rooms and wrote instructions as to how affairs should be managed. Bitterly Washington protested. Not until one thousand two hundred log huts had been built for the men and the whole took on the appearance of a military city did he give up his marquee<sup>1</sup> staked on the hillside where he lived among the men. About Christmas he took up residence in the Deborah Hewes house, a trim stone mansion still standing at the lower end of the valley.<sup>2</sup> Cautiously he hid his discouragements. During the winter Martha Washington came from Mount Vernon to share his burdens and drive away some of the gloom with dances and dinners. He was chastened, but the story of his prayer in the wilderness snow is only a pretty myth.<sup>3</sup>

Smallpox, dysentery, and fever took their daily toll; before Spring three thousand were gone,—deserted or dead. Of the hundreds buried, the grave of only one

<sup>1</sup> Still preserved in the historical museum at Valley Forge.

<sup>2</sup> For full description of the house and its local history, see Ives, Mabel Lorenz, *Ibid*, pp 165, et. seq

<sup>3</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 675.

was ever marked. I descended the hill to the tall obelisk near the Parade Ground to copy the epitaph:

"NEAR THIS SPOT LIES LIEUTENANT JOHN WATERMAN,  
DIED APRIL 23, 1778, WHOSE GRAVE ALONE OF ALL HIS  
COMRADES WAS MARKED."

Into the gloom and the suffering of Valley Forge there came in the severe of winter a German officer, Baron von Steuben, who was to remake the shivering army.<sup>1</sup> He had been sent by Benjamin Franklin, American ambassador to France. Von Steuben drilled the men in the use of weapons; taught them the way of maneuvering; turned raw recruits into a war machine; and enforced lessons of discipline. He rose early and worked late; drilled the men in the snow; marched them back and forth to face an invisible enemy. The technique of "the drill master of the Continental Army" was to reveal its strength in the first battle of the spring. With melting snows the heavy pall slowly lifted from the army.

One day in early May, before breaking camp, the soldiers were marched to the Parade Ground in dress formation. The valley was green; the sun warmed the land; the breath of growing things quickened the men. Washington watched the improved maneuvering with pride; his heart was lighter. When the soldiers rested arms, an officer appeared before each regiment and read the official announcement that France had become an ally. Down the ranks the cheering increased in volume. Soldiers shouted with joy. An anxious fighting morale swept the army. The turn of the tide had come.

<sup>1</sup> Life and services of Baron von Steuben are revealed in the address of Dr. Charles J. Hexamer, Philadelphia, at the unveiling of the statue of Baron von Steuben, Washington, D. C., December 7, 1910. Printed as a public document by the Government.

Upon the shoulder of the hill above the valley I sat a long time viewing the deserted entrenchments and the sweep of the rolling landscape. Slopes of green revealed no trace of the suffering. I descended to the valley for a visit to the rebuilt hospital and reconstructed huts. The atmosphere of erstwhile agonies has disappeared. I climbed the observation tower and surveyed the hallowed country. Memorials, columns, and a huge archway cluttered the land.

Valley Forge does not need them.

No effort to sanctify the sacrifices there made will suffice; no attempt to honor expert generalship will satisfy. As an out-of-doors amphitheatre to recall suffering, despair, privation, want, neglect, and death, Valley Forge must always remain a great natural memorial dedicated to the common soldier.

And from the summit above the Grand Parade Ground, like a great commander, the tones of the chimes, sweet and consoling, proclaim to the Nation that the Peace of God abideth there.

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Philadelphia is the center for tours to Revolutionary battlefields in this vicinity. Chadd's Ford is on U. S. Highway No. 1, on the main road between Philadelphia and Baltimore, about twenty miles West of Philadelphia. The Brandywine section is also approached from West Chester, twenty-four miles West of Philadelphia, on Highway No. 5. Germantown, East of the Schuylkill River, and North of the main business section, is within Greater Philadelphia. Valley Forge is twenty-three miles Northwest. The Lincoln Highway, U. S. 30, passes to the South within three miles of Valley Forge Park.



## CHAPTER XIII

### PARADE GROUNDS OF VICTORY

#### YORKTOWN

ACROSS the York River from Gloucester Point, the Victory monument lifts itself as a pillar of light against the summer sky.

I had known Yorktown from picture and page, but was unprepared for the majesty of its setting and the upward sweep of hill and house from the restless river to the ramparts. The old residences dotting the slope, seen at dusk, might have been gaunt soldiers storming these heights. As the ferry neared the shore, the victory symbol topping the summit grew in its impressiveness. The fishing scenes were blotted out, and only the rugged eminence of historic Yorktown held my imagination.

Valley Forge and Yorktown are separated by three years of anxiety for Washington; three winters of watching, waiting, worrying; three summers spent in delays, postponements, inaction.

And then October 19, 1781!

When time struck that date, the dying Colonial shipping village of Yorktown, that once rivaled New York for commerce, was suddenly transformed into a "stirring memory." The tyranny thrown that day never remounted.

The little English drummer boy who beat the roll for

a parley of truce from the heights at Yorktown silenced the cannon which ushered America to her seat among the Nations.

Before that eventful day arrived there had been many setbacks to the hopes of the Continentals. Long before Washington broke camp at Valley Forge in June, 1778, the British were already disillusioned as to the value of Philadelphia as a strategic military base. A French fleet in the Delaware would make the city untenable—it might arrive any day. Hasty plans were made to return to the shelter of the British fleet in New York harbor. Meantime, Howe had been supplanted by Sir Henry Clinton. After a bizarre farewell to the retiring British General on May 18, in which the whole city turned out to participate in the gaudy tournament enthusiastically, Clinton assumed command and prepared for the evacuation.<sup>1</sup> On June 18 he broke camp and started his retreat across New Jersey.

Washington struck quickly. After sending Benedict Arnold to take over Philadelphia—a mission which was to lead to his eventual undoing—he began a hot pursuit. Both had armies of about fifteen thousand; the American troops were never so well trained. One unnoticed shadow of sinister portent fell across Washington's route. General Charles Lee, who had been released only recently from a British prison, had returned to the army again to become second in command. Washington could not divine that companionship with old friends while held hostage had turned Lee into an unrecognized villain.

Convinced there would be little object for following, once the British line had reached the New Jersey high-

<sup>1</sup> Fiske, John, *The American Revolution*, Vol. II, pp. 57-58.

lands, Washington, on July 28, ordered an attack upon the encampment at Monmouth Court House and Freehold.<sup>1</sup> With trained troops for the first time he now gave battle in the open.

The British line wavered. There were moments of tempest. Stern, threatening, the men trained by von Steuben advanced. Then a halt—confusion. Lee had ordered a retreat. LaFayette rushed up to remonstrate. Lee curtly retorted that it was foolhardy to stand up against the British onslaught.

"The British are not invincible," rejoined the Frenchman, and retired.

When Washington learned of Lee's order, he hurried to the scene. A white rage gripped his features.

"What's the meaning of this?" he demanded of Lee.

Offended at the sharpness of the rebuke, Lee stammered a reply. Some nearby soldiers afterwards testified that Washington swore. Whether he did or not, historians cannot agree. All concur, however, that at that instant Washington took personal command. General von Steuben shouted a few orders. The troops wheeled again into action—rushed forward. In the terrible onrush to regain the ground, Washington's beautiful white horse collapsed and died. The General leaped to his "chestnut mare with long mane and tail." Slowly the British retired to higher ground. Darkness came. The men slept on the ground, awaiting the sunrise to renew the attack.

That night Clinton's army left their unburied dead and hurried on to New York. Lee, smarting under Washington's curt reprimand, demanded a court-martial. In the end Lee was found guilty of disobedience.

<sup>1</sup> About eighteen miles East of Trenton, New Jersey.

Congress dismissed him for insolence. That ended his military career.

After the battle John Laurens, an aide to Washington, wrote to his father, then President of the Congress:

"The merit of restoring the day is due to the General."<sup>1</sup>

One spot on that battlefield is immortalized. During the fighting, Molly Pitcher, who followed her husband to battle, was carrying water to the wounded when she saw her mate disabled. Tossing her pail aside she assumed his place. After the battle, General Greene took the ragged woman to Washington, who complimented her bravery. Pennsylvania voted her a pension; soldiers conferred upon her the title of "Captain Molly." Curious people still drink at the old spring marked in her memory,<sup>2</sup> perhaps to catch the spirit of her intrepidity.

After the midnight escape of the British to New York, Washington followed northward slowly. Soon word came that the French fleet, under Count D'Estaing, which had sailed from France on April 12, now blocked the entrance to New York harbor. Washington visioned a concentrated attack and siege on New York. The British fleet could be destroyed; Clinton would then be forced to capitulate; the war would end. The plan failed when the French discovered that the draught of their vessels was so great it was impossible to cross the harbor sand bars.

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 430.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, pp. 185-186. Molly Pitcher, after the death of her first husband, married John McCauley. She died at Carlisle, Pa., January 22, 1832. The city has erected a monument near the heroine's grave.

Undismayed, the French fleet in August moved against Newport in cooperation with a Rhode Island land attack under Sullivan. This adroit move lured the British fleet from New York. For two days each maneuvered for an advantageous position. A West Indian hurricane descended to dash both caravels to splinters and scatter them. Limping back to Newport, D'Estaing refused to attempt a shelling, and retired to Boston to refit. A revulsion of bitter feeling against the French followed. The season of cold weather was fast approaching. Its blasts chilled Revolutionary hopes. The citizenry became desperately discouraged.

Back to the New Jersey highlands went Washington. On December 11 he went into winter quarters at Middlebrook—the Bound Brook of that day—on the Raritan River.

I visited the Wallace house at Somerville where he lived much of the Winter and Spring. The dark-colored house has a venerable appearance from the street. The rooms are light and pleasant.<sup>1</sup> The cupboards and clothes presses were built for Martha Washington who spent the winter with the General. An attempt has been made to restore the arrangement—Washington's office, the LaFayette room, and the small dining room. The sword captured from Colonel Rahl at Trenton hangs in a glass case.

"The old Wallace house is the pride of our city," the attendant at the gas station remarked as he sold me supplies which would take me to Morristown.

At Somerville Washington was close enough to New York to watch the British operations. He was far

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent history of Wallace House, occupied by Washington from December 11 to 21, 1778, February 5 to June 3, 1779, see Ives, Mabel Lorenz, *Ibid*, pp. 192-203

enough away and in such seclusion as to make a sudden attack impossible. Those long rows of highlands in New Jersey did more to win the Revolution than most historians have recorded. They were a natural barrier behind which Washington's disorganized army hid many times when dangers multiplied.

Still keeping his eye on the British in New York, Washington ventured up the Hudson River in June, planning to clear the valley from British control.

A series of brilliant lightning flashes illumined and ripped across the sky, like the crashes of an electric storm on a dark night. Stony Point on the West banks of the Hudson was the British outpost. It was a thorn to Washington. He conferred with "Mad Anthony" Wayne about taking it.

"I'll storm hell if you will make the plans," the "fighting fool" is said to have told his chief.

Under Washington's direction Wayne took Stony Point brilliantly on July 15, 1779. It was a surprise attack. At the bayonet's point more than five hundred forty prisoners surrendered. All stores were captured. It was a crushing victory. The ramparts were blown up in order to make further occupancy by the British untenable. News of the brilliant exploit made frenzied a people weary of the prolonged war.<sup>1</sup> Wayne became an American hero.

"Such bravery would elevate the ideas of Europe," Gerard, the French minister, wrote in haste to von Steuben.

Two days later Washington came down from West Point to view the desolation. He was overjoyed at the success attained. Before he departed he insisted that

<sup>1</sup> Preston, John Hyde, *A Gentleman Rebel, Mad Anthony Wayne*, pp. 178-183.

he be allowed to shake the hand of every soldier who had participated and thank him personally. As the men advanced in single file, close by stood Wayne, smiling.

One month later the public again gasped. At Washington's suggestion Major Henry Lee made a daring attack on Paulus Hook within the hearing distance of Clinton's army in New York. Not a gun was fired. The bayonet did its gruesome work. When the British alarm guns began to boom in New York on the morning of August 19, Lee already had retired. He retreated leaving fifty of the enemy dead, and took with him one hundred fifty-eight prisoners. Apprehensive over the suddenness and relentlessness of these attacks, Clinton recalled his scattered forces from Rhode Island in order to strengthen New York.

It was a year of years of flashing surprises. From across the ocean the French sent a story of a startling Naval victory. At the break between England and the Colonies, John Paul Jones, an adventurous youth of Fredericksburg, Virginia, applied to Congress for a commission in the Navy. It was granted. He raided the English shipping ruthlessly; he became the terror of the sea.<sup>1</sup>

France refitted an ancient ship for him in the Summer of 1779. He named it the "Bon Homme Richard," in honor of Benjamin Franklin. At sea he engaged the British "Serapis" in battle on September 23. When the English saw the sides of the American raider shot away, the Commander demanded a surrender.

"I have just begun to fight," Jones shouted, and proceeded to get his boat in line to continue. The "Sera-

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol III, p 223

pis" struck colors. Jones transferred his crew, and the "Bon Homme Richard," shattered and shell-riddled, sank. The battle is one of the great sea fights in Naval history. Jones was hailed as the founder of the United States Navy.<sup>1</sup> In 1905 his body was brought to the United States from France to rest in a black marble sarcophagus in the lower rotunda under the gold-domed chapel of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis.

Encouraged by the brilliance of lesser victories during the Summer, Washington again retired to New Jersey and went into winter quarters at Morristown. The army was sheltered in huts in the vicinity; the officers housed in private homes.

"The Winter of 1779-1780 that Washington lived here was the coldest in history," the attendants at the old Ford mansion told me. "The difficulties which Washington met were like those at Valley Forge."

Of the many headquarters used by Washington, I liked the Ford mansion at Morristown best. It reminded me so much of Mount Vernon. The touch of Washington is still there. The presence of his spirit warms the rooms. Once or twice I looked out across the lawns to see if, imaginatively, the shadow down the road were General-on-horse returning from camp.

From the summit where stands the mansion, surrounded by lawn and trees, Washington could see the encampments of the whole army. It is a large house; it appears today a patriarch of architecture; its plank walls are of unblemished white; its Colonial doorway beams hospitality. Portraits of Washington and his

<sup>1</sup> After the Revolution, Jones entered the service of Catherine of Russia. Because of intrigues he left that country and went to France, where he died on July 18, 1792.



Generals hang on the walls; a mahogany dining-room suite used by the Washingtons is ready to be set for breakfast; his desk is open by the fireplace awaiting his reappearance as if he were to be back any moment; the smaller room of his chief secretary, Alexander Hamilton, adjoins. Museum cases are crowded with his clothes and military trappings<sup>1</sup>—the dishes used by his family; the suit and sword worn by Washington at his first inaugural; a pair of pale blue slippers worn by Martha at receptions.

At the entrance gate is the equestrian statue of Washington riding his famous chestnut colored mare as he appeared that morning of June 1, 1780, when he started his army back to the Hudson River. He looked older that day. Before the end of that year more lines and more sadness would furrow his face. Early in the year many soldiers without pay grew mutinous. Paper money issued by Congress so depreciated in value that few would accept it.

As the end of the year approached without victories, a cruel betrayal of Washington occurred. Benedict Arnold sold out to the British. For the promised delivery of West Point to the enemy, he was to have a place in the British army and twenty thousand pounds in gold.

While holding Philadelphia for Washington after the dark winter at Valley Forge he had met and married Peggy Shippen, the daughter of a prominent Philadelphia tory. He bought her a mansion. Debts piled up. His wife wanted money. He wanted money. Congress had failed to recognize him. Money and revenge disturbed his days and dreams.

<sup>1</sup> Peixotto, Ernest, *Ibid*, p. 208.

Since early July he had been in command of West Point—a place the British had wished to capture.

A betrayal offered both money and place.

At West Haverstraw, high up on the wind-swept Western banks of the Hudson River, is the "Treason House" where Benedict Arnold conferred with Major John André, British conspirator, on the night of September 23. Arnold delivered to him the plans of West Point. Next day André was captured at Tarrytown and later was hanged. Arnold fled to the British.

Washington had no premonition of Arnold's infidelity. He had gone to Hartford, Connecticut, on September 21, for a conference with Count de Rochambeau, who had arrived in July with six thousand men. It was on his way back to West Point that the message arrived which told him of Arnold's treason. Tears filled his eyes as he read.

"Whom can we trust now?" he asked of the youthful LaFayette as he handed him the despatch.<sup>1</sup>

To Wade, Washington sent the message: "Arnold has gone to the enemy. You are in command. Be vigilant."

On the fields of the Battle of Saratoga is an imposing monument honoring the leaders and heroes who defeated the British General Burgoyne on October 17, 1777. The niche for Arnold is vacant. At West Point his treachery is recorded on shield form upon which only two lines appear—name unknown; achievements forgotten:

MAJOR GENERAL

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BORN 1740

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<sup>1</sup> Lodge, Henry Cabot, *Ibid*, p. 487

News from the South was also disheartening. Gates, appointed by Congress without consultation with Washington, had been defeated by Cornwallis at Camden on August 16. The blow was crushing. The task of repairing the loss was now turned over to Washington. Greene was now sent South by him to take command.

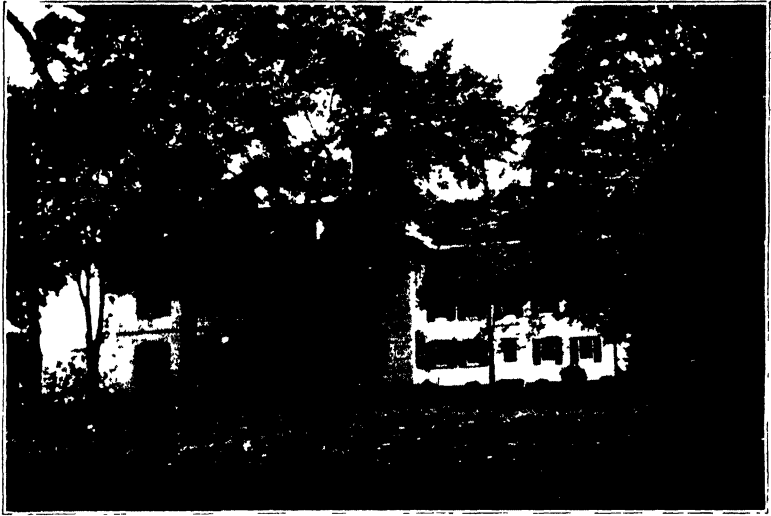
At the end of another year of little accomplishment, Washington went into headquarters at New Windsor, on the Hudson River two miles below Newburgh.<sup>1</sup> Like a heavy, overhanging fog, the gloom grew in density.

While Washington and Rochambeau perfected plans in early Summer of 1781 for the capture of New York, LaFayette played hide-and-seek with Cornwallis, driven North by Greene into Virginia. Discouraged by his elusiveness, Cornwallis in early August retired to Yorktown to establish a base. He did not know of the intention of Count de Grasse to bring the French fleet from the West Indies to the Chesapeake. This Washington learned on August 14. Upon the information he moved quickly.<sup>2</sup>

Pretending to be hastening plans for the capture of New York, Washington and Rochambeau on August 19 slipped away and began their joint march to Virginia. Soon an army two miles long stretched along the highways. When Clinton discovered the ruse, it was too late to pursue. While Washington's army pushed on, Washington himself stopped at Mount Vernon on September 9 for a three-day visit—the first

<sup>1</sup> *The George Washington Atlas*, United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, Plate 44.

<sup>2</sup> For map of route, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol I, p. 419.



WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AT MORRISTOWN



MOORE HOUSE, WHERE CORNWALLIS SURRENDERED



sight of his home in six years. Then on to Yorktown.

Already Cornwallis was caught in a trap. On September 28 the siege began. Continental and French armies surrounded him by land. The fleet under Count de Grasse arrived in time to frustrate his escape by sea. Day and night the shelling of the British proceeded. Closer and closer the parallel lines were moved forward.

On October 17 Cornwallis sent a flag of truce. Hostilities ceased. The smoke drifted away.

Yorktown has changed but little since that day of siege. Some of its streets with low houses look like those of old English villages; gnarled mulberry trees stand about awkwardly and aging. Two tablets down the hill told us the story of the British redoubts ordered taken by Washington. Alexander Hamilton captured the one easily; the French under Count de Deux Ponts carried the other with a heavy loss.

"The work is done and well done," declared Washington to Henry Knox as he saw the lines advance. Cornwallis' position was now hopeless. He attempted at night to escape by water, but a storm tossed his rafts ashore. He must surrender.

I tramped over the shell-furrowed earth. A mile from Yorktown on a hill I found the home of "Widow Moore," where the commission met on October 18 and arranged the terms—the same General Cornwallis had handed General Lincoln at Charleston the year before.<sup>1</sup> The rooms are quaint. In each corner is a fireplace. The room where the agreement was made is large and airy; historic personages sit in the ghostly

<sup>1</sup> Complete letter from George Washington to Lord Cornwallis, giving terms of surrender, October 18, 1781, in *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p 455

atmosphere around the table, signing the paper parchment.

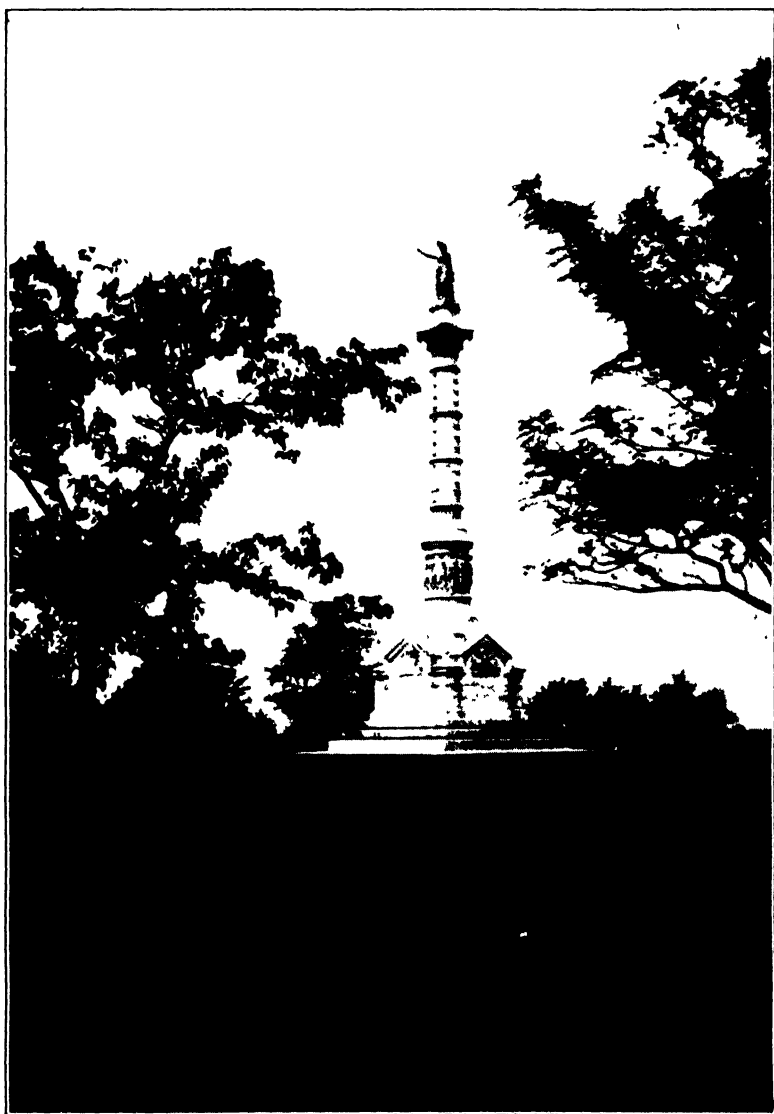
On the afternoon following, while the British band played "The World's Turned Upside Down," the captured army stacked their guns and "became prisoners of war" to the combined forces of America and France. Cornwallis remained in seclusion. His sword was given to General O'Hara, his representative, to be surrendered.<sup>1</sup> Washington, mounted on his chestnut charger, "Nelson," witnessed the scene from the head of the American line. A small tablet marks the site of the actual surrender. The world was to wait for a generation for Waterloo to furnish a similar setting.

Back at the summit I paused to view the blue waters of the York, until my eyes fell on this inscription at the base of the Victory monument:

AT YORKTOWN ON OCTOBER 19, 1781, AFTER A SIEGE OF NINETEEN DAYS BY 5,000 AMERICANS AND 7,000 FRENCH TROOPS OF THE LINE, 3,500 MILITIA UNDER THE COMMAND OF GENERAL THOMAS NELSON AND THIRTY-SIX FRENCH SHIPS OF WAR, EARL CORNWALLIS, COMMANDER OF THE BRITISH FORCES AT YORKTOWN AND GLOUCESTER, SURRENDERED HIS ARMY OF 7,251 OFFICERS AND MEN, 840 SEAMEN, AND 240 STANDARDS TO HIS EXCELLENCY, GEORGE WASHINGTON, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE COMBINED FORCES OF AMERICA AND FRANCE, AND TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE COMPTE DE ROCHAMBEAU, COMMANDING THE AUXILIARY TROOPS OF HIS MOST CHRISTIAN MAJESTY IN AMERICA, AND TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE COMPTE DE GRASSE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE NAVAL ARMY OF FRANCE IN THE CHESAPEAKE.

From Yorktown Washington hurried back to Philadelphia. On his way he stopped at Fredericksburg to visit his sister Betty and his aged mother.

<sup>1</sup> Davis, Jane E., *Jamestown and Her Neighbors*, p. 60; Eckenrode, H. J., *The Story of the Campaign and Siege of Yorktown*, Senate Document No. 318, 71st Congress, 3d Session, p. 53.



MONUMENT AT YORKTOWN COMMEMORATING THE SURRENDER  
OF CORNWALLIS





Old home—mother—one hour—the joy of reunion—  
the sadness of parting.

Forward, march!

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Yorktown is reached on U. S. Highway No. 17 Southeast from Fredericksburg, Virginia, and on Highways Nos. 30 and 31, Southeast from Richmond, Virginia.

Yorktown, Williamsburg, and Jamestown, although separated by a few miles, are so close in their influence upon National development that it is impossible to dissociate them. About twelve miles to the Northeast of Williamsburg on the York River is Yorktown, where the Revolution ended with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, Commander of the British forces.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE COMMONER SCORNS A CROWN

#### NEWBURGH

HIGH up the West bank of the Hudson River at Newburgh sprawls a Dutch stone mansion which destiny decreed should become a museum rather than the first castle of an American king. Here Washington, after the victory of Yorktown, scorned the suggestion of a Crown.

Other military headquarters of Washington—more than a hundred of them—treasure their stories of heroic battles and deeds. The Jonathan Hasbrouck house at Newburgh, where Washington headquartered on April 1, 1782,<sup>1</sup> to spend fifteen months hopefully awaiting peace, commemorates rather the sad epochs of public ingratitude which stirred a military to discontent.

Gathered about him was an army in idleness. Its men, waiting "to be turned into the world, were soured by penury." Dissensions destroyed discipline. Unpaid, neglected, the soldiers brooded over real and fancied wrongs. They threatened to remain in camp until justice was done them. Only a Washington turned statesman was able to stem the unrest so that the army might be sent home peacefully.

Stories of sacrifice cluster about the Longfellow home at Cambridge, the first Washington headquarters; they gather around the Hewes house, scene of the

<sup>1</sup> Corning, A. Elwood, *Washington at Temple Hill*, p. 90.

despairs of Valley Forge; and they concern the Ford mansion at Morristown, where the spirit of a discouraged army was rekindled.<sup>1</sup> The Hasbrouck home at Newburgh wears no war garlands. Its sturdy, squat-like features, its quaint sloping roofs and narrow windows, are etched with memories of its past. Not unlike was the visage of Washington in that critical period when his face was seamed with the worries from obtaining delayed justice for the soldiers, and over finding a safe method of founding, without army revolt, a stable government. The Hasbrouck house heard the reproachful words of the General alarmed by the schemes of monarchy. It cherished the sound of his stern rebuke to those who would prolong a rule by the military. It perpetuates its enduring characteristics in the "sacrament of remembrance" to Washington who made its days immortal.

The spirit of democracy voiced by Washington at Newburgh gave momentum to the surge of a people to establish a Republic.

Even the joy of victory at Yorktown was turned to personal grief. When the war came to Virginia, Jack Custis, a stepson of the General, wished to serve as an aide. Before the day for the British capitulation arrived, he was taken with fever. On the morning of the surrender, weak and trembling, he was supported to the field. A few hours later he was taken to the home of an aunt in Williamsburg. There Washington and the boy's mother found him fatally stricken.

After the death the General adopted the two youngest grandchildren—Eleanor (Nellie) Custis and

<sup>1</sup> Of the many homes used for a day or months by Washington during the years of active war, the three mentioned are more renowned than the others.

George Washington Parke Custis—both destined to play a role of devotion and comfort in family life of the General and his wife.<sup>1</sup> The children were to be the jewels and the joys of Mount Vernon.

Upon reaching Philadelphia after Yorktown, Washington spent four months in conferences with the Congress and then in March, 1782, accompanied by Mrs. Washington and the staff, he set out for Newburgh-on-the-Hudson.

During the fifteen months which followed, Washington chafed under the stress of "watchful waiting." The army believed the war was over, and it became difficult to enforce discipline. Bickering and plotting beset the idle and disgruntled men. Had it not been for the cool judgments of Washington in this critical period, the fruits of victory might have been lost.

No tour in America known to me is more alluring than that from New York to Newburgh over the new, six million dollar Bear Mountain Bridge. The road leads through the Sleepy Hollow country immortalized by the tales, from the pen of Washington Irving, of Rip Van Winkle, Ichabod Crane, and Old Gun Powder. It passes, at Tarrytown, the site of André's capture in his treason with Arnold. At each rise from the valleys along the way are retentive views across the majestic Hudson with the famous Palisades standing steadfast, immobile, charming, in a sun-flooded, colorful background.

But the most daring of all scenery comes after crossing the Bear Mountain Bridge. There the Storm King Highway lifts itself to the precipice side of the

<sup>1</sup> Lowther, Minnie Kendall, *Mount Vernon, Its Children, Its Romances, Its Allied Families and Mansions*, p. 36.

lofty Storm King Mountain and follows for miles a route carved in the granite four hundred feet above the river. From the elevation there is grandeur in the wide bold gorge and the river's sweep. Only a divine hand could have shaped a channel so imposing and inspiring. A realization of the sheer accomplishment of this audacious engineering feat, with thrilling curves and the changing wonders, makes the way comparable with the famous Axemstrasse road from Italy to Switzerland.

Upon reaching Newburgh, I went direct to the old stone house of seven rooms, where General Washington had spent so many weary, inactive months after Yorktown. Entering the grounds I saw beds of gorgeous flowers, like those grown there by the wife of Washington in her leisure hours when she made the slopes "bloom like the desert of the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> The quiet atmosphere of a home pervades the rooms. LaFayette's comment on the one room with seven doors and a window has made that house an architectural curiosity. A sacred devotion to high purposes dedicated there has touched the mansion with magic fascination.

"In this room, at the height of the discontent in the army, during the Spring of 1782, General Washington received a letter suggesting that he become a King," the woman custodian explained as she took me to Washington's office.<sup>2</sup>

"Colonel Lewis Nicola, an officer highly esteemed by Washington, and probably reflecting the spirit of dissatisfaction in the army, sent the General a signed let-

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> For full description of house and its associates, see Anthony, Walter C., *Washington's Headquarters, Newburgh, N. Y.*

ter from Fishkill in which he set forth the hardships endured by the soldiers during the eight years, the neglect of the men by Congress, and argued the disadvantages of a republican form of government compared with a monarchy. In it was the veiled suggestion that the opportunity was ripe for a Kingship. The letter ired Washington. He responded promptly and with indignation. His refusal put an end to the talk of monarchy in America."

Among the pamphlets distributed at the mansion is a copy of Washington's reply, May 22, 1782, in which he demolished decisively the Kingship proposal. I sat down by the fireside where the angered General had composed it to ponder the burning words:

"With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment, I have read with attention the sentiments you have submitted to my perusal. Be assured, Sir, no occurrence in the course of the war has given me more painful sensations, than your information of there being such ideas existing in the army, as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence and reprehend with severity. For the present the communicatn. of them will rest in my own bosom, unless some further agitation of the matter shall make a disclosure necessary.

"I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address, which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs, that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable. At the same time, in justice to my own feelings, I must add, that no man possesses a more sincere wish to see ample justice done to the army than I do; and, as far as my powers and influence, in a constitutional way, extend, they shall be employed to the utmost of my abili-

ties to effect it, should there be any occasion. Let me conjure you, then, as you have any regard for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, to banish these thoughts from your mind, and never communicate, as from yourself or any one else, a sentiment of the like nature.”<sup>1</sup>

When I had finished the reading, I looked up to find the attendant still with me. From her manner I saw she had more to tell me.

“That letter did not quiet the disaffection in the army,” she continued. “The men were then camped about five miles out at a place now known as Temple Hill, named after a wooden meeting house in the cantonment. They had petitioned Congress for pay and for a redress of their grievances. Early in March, 1783, the response of Congress was received in which their demands were insolently ignored.

“By this time the men had secretly formed cliques. An anonymous letter was circulated—now said to be written by Major John Armstrong<sup>2</sup>—calling the soldiers to meet at the Temple on a designated date to take drastic action. It declared that any man who advised moderation should be suspected.

“When Washington learned of the call, he realized that the disturbance in the army had reached a dangerous stage. He asked that the date of meeting be delayed and then at the appointed time he appeared. I think the address he then made is one of his most famous.”

“Have you been to Temple Hill?” she questioned. I answered that I had not.

“You should go there,” she added. “It is less than

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, pp. 72-73, Irving, Washington, *Life of George Washington*, Vol. IV, pp. 402-403.

<sup>2</sup> Corning, A Elwood, *Ibid*, p. 117



five miles out in the country. During the fall of 1934 one of the original huts used by the Continental soldiers in this last encampment of the Revolutionary Army was reclaimed and re-dedicated;<sup>1</sup> the site of the Temple building where General Washington delivered his Newburgh address has been marked and a monument of field stone erected on the spot where the Order of the Cincinnati was started."

"If there is any old hut connected with Washington's service, we'll go," my wife interrupted.

The last Revolutionary camp ground is a land of green pastures and rolling ravines. A narrow road leads through the valley, making the sunny hillsides one long picture of peaceful, rural enchantment. Efforts are being made to reclaim a part of the old cantonment ground for park purposes. Temple hall has disappeared. Burned soon after the soldiers had disbanded.

I found the site where the Temple of Virtue had stood. From two faces on the crude shaft, built of field stone and erected on the spot, I copied:

ON THIS GROUND WAS ERECTED  
THE TEMPLE  
OR NEW REPUBLIC BUILDING  
BY THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION  
1782-3  
THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE REPUBLIC  
—  
ON THIS SITE THE SOCIETY OF THE  
CINCINNATI  
WAS BORN MAY 10, 1783  
AT THE LAST CANTONMENT OF THE  
AMERICAN ARMY  
AND IT STILL LIVES TO PERPETUATE  
THE MEMORIES OF THE REVOLUTION<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ceremonies dedicating Revolutionary Hut at Temple Hill, October 7, 1934, under auspices of National Temple Hill Association, Inc., Newburgh, N. Y.

<sup>2</sup> General Washington was elected President General of the newly organized Society of the Cincinnati, June 19, 1783. For complete history of the order, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, pp. 567-576.



SITE OF THE TEMPLE OF VIRTUE, NEWBURGH, NEW YORK



I visioned Washington coming to speak to his discontented army accompanied by Generals Gates and Knox.<sup>1</sup> It was noon on March 15, 1783. He went direct to the Temple. General Gates presided. There was a tense coolness among the men as Washington sat down.

As he arose he drew a paper from his pocket and then fumbled nervously for his silver-framed spectacles.

"You see, gentlemen, I have not only grown grey, but blind in your service," he jested as he placed the glasses before his eyes and turned to his paper. He paused a moment. There was a flutter in the audience. Brave men touched by the words turned their eyes downward. Washington then added:

"If my conduct heretofore has not evinced to you that I have been a faithful friend to the army, my declaration of it at this time would be equally unavailing and improper. But, as I was among the first, who embarked in the cause of our common country; as I have never left your side one moment, but when called from you on public duty; as I have been a constant companion and witness of your distresses, and not among the last to feel and acknowledge your merits; as I have ever considered my own military reputation as inseparably connected with that of the army; as my heart has ever expanded with joy, when I have heard its praises, and my indignation has arisen, when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it; it can scarcely be supposed, at this late stage of the war, that I am indifferent to its interests." <sup>2</sup>

Toward the close of his address he turned to the malcontents:

<sup>1</sup> Corning, A Elwood, *Ibid*, p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 73.

"While I give you these assurances . . . let me entreat you, Gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which, viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity and sully the glory you have hitherto maintained. Let me request you to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress, that, previous to your dissolution as an army, that they will cause all your accounts to be fairly liquidated, as directed in their resolutions, which were published to you two days ago, and that they will adopt the most effectual measures in their power to render ample justice to you for your faithful and meritorious services. And let me conjure you in the name of our common country, as you value your sacred honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man, who wishes, under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood gates of civil discord, and deluge our rising empire in blood."

When he had finished he passed hurriedly through the hall and, mounting his awaiting horse at the door, rode away. A resolution of esteem for Washington was passed immediately; another declared faith in the government but viewed "with disdain the infamous propositions contained in the late anonymous addresses to the officers of the army, and resent with indignation the secret attempts of some unknown persons to collect the officers together, in a manner totally subversive of all discipline and good order."<sup>1</sup>

The danger which threatened to disrupt the army had been averted. The coup d'état to overthrow the

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, John, *Life of George Washington*, pp. 241-242.

flimsy tissue of the Articles of Confederation had been exposed and defeated. The men succeeded finally in getting pay for five years.<sup>1</sup>

Within a month, on April 18, 1783, on the eighth anniversary of Lexington and Concord, the terms of Peace were read from the Steps of the Temple.

The end of the war had come. Soon a policy of gradual furloughs disbanded the army in peace.

And now emerged the statesman!

On June 8, before leaving the old stone mansion at Newburgh, Washington sent a circular letter to the States pointing out the needs of the country with the return of Peace. In this remarkable document he said:

"There are four things, which, I humbly conceive, are essential to the well-being, I may even venture to say, to the existence of the United States, as an independent power.

"First. An indissoluble union of the States under one federal head.

"Secondly. A sacred regard to public justice.

"Thirdly. The adoption of a proper peace establishment; and,

"Fourthly. The prevalence of that pacific and friendly disposition among the people of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies; to make those mutual concessions, which are requisite to the general prosperity; and, in some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the community.

"These are the pillars on which the glorious fabric of our independency and national character must be supported. Liberty is the basis; and whoever would dare to sap the foundation, or overturn the structure,

<sup>1</sup> Thayer, William Roscoe, *Ibid*, p. 134. In 1775 the pay of privates was made \$6.66 a month. Later a cash bounty and land bounty were added, and a yearly suit of clothes. The pay was irregular and the paper money rapidly depreciated.

under whatever specious pretext he may attempt it, will merit the bitterest execration, and the severest punishment, which can be inflicted by his injured country."<sup>1</sup>

No monument to Washington will be as enduring as the thought expressed by him in that letter to the Governors.

No place should be more revered than this spot where Washington crushed the spirit of monarchy.

No home should be more renowned than the old Dutch mansion at Newburgh-on-the-Hudson where Washington wrote those baptismal words of Faith for a disgruntled army, which charted the way for the founding of the Republic.

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Newburgh, where Washington had his headquarters in 1782-83 while awaiting terms of peace, is between New York and Albany. It is fifty miles from New York and eighty-five miles from Albany. Highway No. 9 follows the East bank of the Hudson River and Highway No. 9A the West bank. The scenic part of the route, the famous Storm King Highway, is between Peekskill and Newburgh on the West bank.

On either route from New York to Newburgh are many places of historic interest. On the West Bank are Tappan, where André was imprisoned and later hanged as a spy, and Stony Point, scene of Wayne's brilliant capture. On the East bank are Tarrytown, where André was captured, and the Sleepy Hollow country, made famous by Washington Irving's legends.

<sup>1</sup> For the complete letter addressed to the Governors of all the states on disbanding the army, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, pp. 457-459. Also see Frothingham, Thomas G., *Ibid*, p. 381.

## CHAPTER XV

### A WORDLESS FAREWELL

#### FRAUNCES TAVERN

RICH shadows of autumn fell restfully across the doorway of old Nassau Hall at Princeton University. Beneath the cool, fragrant shades where Washington had approached for peace conferences with the Continental Congress,<sup>1</sup> I viewed the weather-stained building, mellowed by college traditions and marked with the runics of age and war. Within are the second floor rooms which for four months before the British troops withdrew from New York housed the seat of government. On the wall hangs the famous painting of Washington by Charles Wilson Peale in the identical frame which held the picture of King George III during the early stages of the Revolution until shot away by American troops.

Out in the country three miles, on a declivity above the village of Rocky Hill, glistens in whiteness the Berrien house, known as Rockingham, where Washington made his home toward the close of the war. Here he wrote his "Farewell Address to the Armies."

How spectral that wraith-like building appears at a distance in the bright noonday! Once within its gate-

<sup>1</sup> The eight cities used as Capitals of the United States before the adoption of the Constitution were Philadelphia; Baltimore, Lancaster, Pa.; York, Pa.; Princeton, N J, Annapolis, Md, Trenton, N J, New York City. For dates, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 686.



way there is something that makes one feel that Washington, at the end of eight contentious years, came to this beautiful upland for a few months of respite and vacation. And I half fancied as I gazed from its eminence above the Millstone River, where so often he paused, how he must have enjoyed the golden sunshine of fall, the vast panorama of rich farm lands, the lengthening points of shadows, and the intermingling autumn tints of brown and saffron.

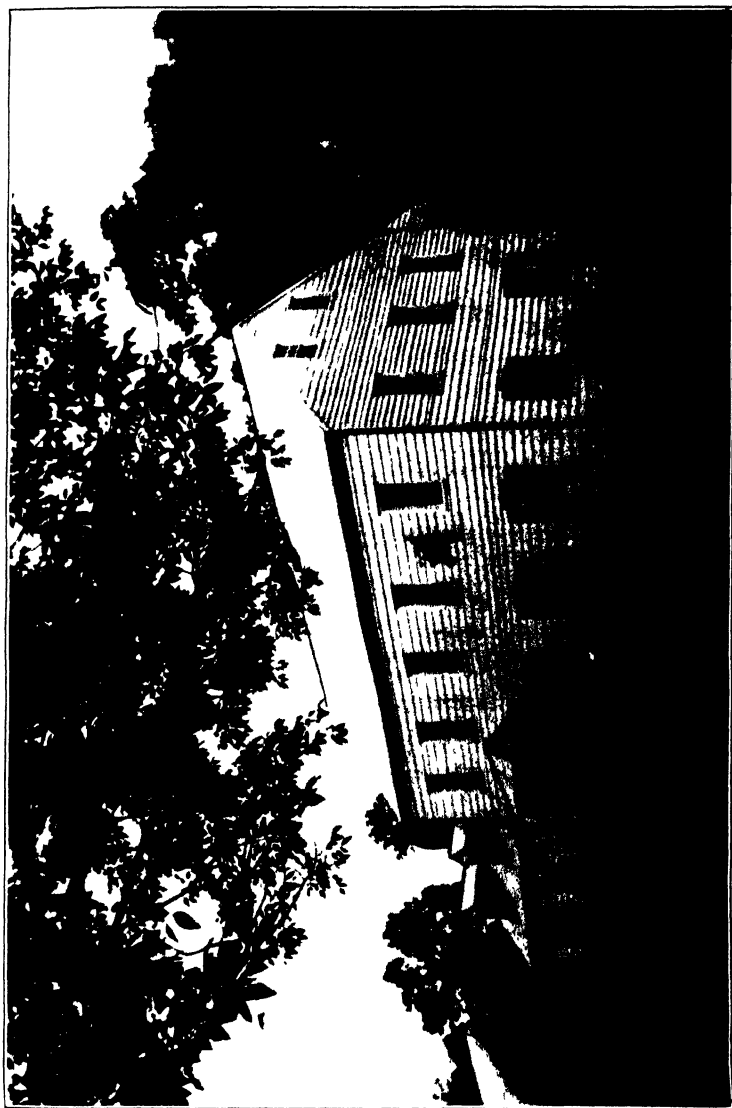
Rockingham has an interest, however, beyond and apart from the quiet of its natural surroundings.

No sooner had Washington issued his letter to the Governors from Newburgh on June 8, 1783, outlining plans for disbanding the army, than the Continental Congress saw the advantage of his nearby presence for consultation on methods of restoring the country to a peace basis. Moreover, its own security was being threatened by discontented soldiers. Raw Pennsylvania troops marched with fixed bayonets upon its sessions in Philadelphia, entered the halls where the meeting was in progress, and demanded an immediate redress. An adjournment halted the imbroglio. Members were insulted on the way to their homes. Their progress on the streets was blockaded.

When Washington learned of this outrage, he detached fifteen hundred Regulars to suppress the mutiny and sent a letter to the President of the Congress expressing his indignation:<sup>1</sup>

“For when we consider, that these Pennsylvania levies, who have now mutinied, are recruits and soldiers of a day, who have not borne the heat and burdens of

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, John, *Life of Washington*, Chapter XXIV, p. 243; Frothingham, Thomas G., *Ibid*, p. 382. Letter to the President of the Congress, June 24, 1783.



BERRIEN HOUSE, ROCKY HILL



the war, and who can have very few hardships to complain of; and when we at the same time recollect, that those soldiers, who have lately been furloughed from the army, are the veterans who have patiently endured hunger, nakedness, and cold, who have suffered and bled without a murmur, and who, with perfect good order have retired to their homes without a settlement of their accounts, or a farthing of money in their pockets; we shall be as much astonished at the virtues of the latter, as we are struck with horror and detestation at the proceedings of the former; and every candid mind, without indulging ill-grounded prejudices, will undoubtedly make the proper discrimination."

To escape the hostility, Elias Boudinot, President of the Congress, asked the members to re-assemble at Princeton on June 30. Meantime, Washington hastened the furloughing of the army at Newburgh. To familiarize himself with some of the Western country evacuated by the British, he started July 18 on an eighteen-day tour through the Hudson and Mohawk regions observing the possibilities of navigation—the future Erie Canal route.

Returning to Newburgh he remained long enough for the recovery of Mrs. Washington from camp fever, to place General Knox in command, and to take a hasty farewell of the army before starting South on August 18. Because of the heat of summer, the journey was made in easy stages. Five days later Washington arrived at Princeton. He went at once to the home of Judge Berrien, three miles out in the country, at Rocky Hill, where he established headquarters.<sup>1</sup>

Congress was elated over his coming. President Bou-

<sup>1</sup> History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration, Vol. III, p 465; *Journals of the Continental Congress*, XXIV, p 521

dinot called on him officially on August 24. Washington was informed that he would be received in audience by Congress the following day.

Washington came early. A group of spectators cheered him as he entered Nassau Hall, where Congress held its sessions. Ceremoniously the body arose at his entrance.

"It has been the singular happiness of the United States," began President Boudinot, addressing him when all had been seated, "that during a war so long, so dangerous, and so important, Providence has been graciously pleased to preserve the life of a general, who has merited and possessed the uninterrupted confidence and affection of his fellow citizens. In other nations many have performed services, for which they have deserved and received the thanks of the public. But to you, Sir, peculiar praise is due. Your services have been essential in acquiring and establishing the freedom and independence of your country."

Washington acknowledged the tribute and expressed his gratitude of "my country, for the great and uniform support I have received in every vicissitude of fortune, and for the many distinguished honors which Congress have been pleased to confer upon me in the war."

Came weeks of conferences with Congress over "public concerns;" came evenings of official dinners and dances. So extraordinary was the entertainment that Washington, not to be outdone, sent to New York for Sam Fraunce, proprietor of an exclusive tavern which bore the owner's name, to prepare the food for his official banquets. The cords of eight years of military restraint loosened. Hours at the desk and days in the

field had made the man of fifty-one appear older. Service had told heavily upon him. The man of silence found leisure at Rocky Hill.

There is a little "Blue Room" on the second floor of the Rockingham mansion which Washington used as a study. The ceiling is white; the wainscoting blue. The door opens on a long veranda. These are sacred precincts.<sup>1</sup>

"At this table Washington wrote his farewell to the army," the attendant announced as I waited expectantly, and then remained quiet. The impressive silence seemed an appropriate tribute to the portent and beauty of the departing message written in the stillness of this rural retreat.

The orders, issued from "Rocky Hill, near Princeton, November 2, 1783," supplement Washington's letter to the Governors of the States on July 8. The language has the warmth of homespun. After a prophetic admonition on the need of a strong union of States, he turns to the veterans:

"And being now to conclude these his last public orders, to take his ultimate leave in a short time of the military character, and to bid a final adieu to the armies he has so long had the honor to command, he can only again offer in their behalf his recommendations to their grateful country, and his prayers to the God of armies. May ample justice be done them here, and may the choicest of Heaven's favors, both here and hereafter, attend those, who, under the Divine auspices, have secured innumerable blessings for others. With these wishes and this benediction, the Commander-in-chief is about to retire from service. The curtain

<sup>1</sup> For complete description of this house, see Ives, Mabel Lorenz, *Ibid*, pp. 317-319.

of separation will soon be drawn, and the military scene to him will be closed for ever.”<sup>1</sup>

Little remained to be done. Long before the actual signing of the Treaty of Peace at Paris, September 3, Sir Guy Carleton, in charge of the remaining British forces quartered in New York, had planned an early departure. Delays intervened. Many of the Loyalists insisted upon more time to pack their belongings. The exodus increased. Soon the ships were loaded.<sup>2</sup>

Finally on November 18 Washington wrote to the President of the Congress that Carleton had fixed the date of departure. Bad weather compelled another two-day respite. On the morning of November 25 the British troops embarked; down the Bowery in orderly columns came the happy Americans. The deserted forts were quickly repossessed.

Washington's re-entrance in New York was the occasion of the greatest rejoicing. The march became a triumphal ovation. The streets were crowded with a gladsome people. Women threw garlands of flowers at Washington and his generals. Windows in the squat buildings of lower New York were jammed with anxious people. Those who had been driven from their homes because of allegiance to the Revolution came swarming back from exile to claim their property. For three days the noise and celebration were unabated. Expatriated citizens gave an elaborate dinner for Washington. The established government of state moved in to restore the civil order. Vandalism was not tolerated.

<sup>1</sup> History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration, Vol. III, p. 504; Ford, Worthington C., *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 333.

<sup>2</sup> Van Tyne, C. H., *Loyalists*, pp. 94-105, McLaughlin, A. C., *The Federation and the Constitution* (American Nation, a History), p. 37.

Upwards of forty officers<sup>1</sup> had come to New York to witness the brilliant spectacle. They were feted by city and state, accorded every attention. Washington invited them to be present at a noonday farewell to be held at Fraunces Tavern on December 4.<sup>2</sup> When all were within, the Commander entered. On the threshold he paused. The sight of so many old friends touched him for the moment. Going directly to a table he filled a glass with wine and then turned his sad countenance and grave blue eyes toward them. A sudden impinge of sorrow swept the stern features of the guests.

"With a heart full of love and gratitude," Washington said, "I now take leave of you, most devoutly wishing that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable."

After draining the glass in a farewell sacrament, he hesitated as if to say more. The silence seemed inexorable.

"I cannot come to each of you to take my leave," he finally continued in suppressed words, "but shall be obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand."

Brave officers had difficulty in concealing their deep affection.

General Knox stepped forward. Then the others. To each he gave his hand and the embrace of a brother. Tears hid in his eyelids.

<sup>1</sup> Among those probably there were Schuyler, Gates, Greene, Knox, Steuben, Lincoln, McDougall, Hand, James Clinton, Wayne, Stark, Henry Lee, Kosciuszko, Pickering, Nicholas Fish, Alexander Hamilton, Philip VanCortlandt, Rufus Putnam, and Benjamin Tallmadge.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall, John, *The Life of George Washington*, Chapter XXIV, pp. 243-245.



It was a wordless farewell!

When the last guest had presented himself, Washington turned to the door and started on foot to the nearby ferry. Silently his devoted comrades followed. An awaiting barge carried him across the North River to Paulus Hook. As the boat pushed off, he turned, took off his hat—bowed and waved.

Surrounded by tall skyscrapers, Fraunces Tavern still stands at Broad and Pearl Streets in lower Manhattan. Its brick exterior is ruddy in its aspect. An American flag hangs over the hooded doorway of white where Washington departed.

A courtly Colonial gentleman dressed in powdered wig, knee breeches, satin coat, and black silver buckled shoes, opened the door and ushered me in. His speech and manner conjured for me the hour when Washington there entertained.

"General Washington's parlors are at the top of the stairs to the right," he directed as he took my hat.

Cases of Revolutionary flags crowd the places where Washington's Generals waited. A table stands by the door. I edged my way to a spot near the fireplace where Washington bade goodby to the officers.

"Washington has gone to his boats," I fancied some one whispered after I had lingered for nearly an hour. Hurriedly I departed for a view of the vanished ferry site.

After leaving New York, Washington proceeded to Philadelphia to render his financial account of eight years standing to the comptroller. He refused a salary. His expenses were \$64,315. Detailed journal entries in his own handwriting were submitted for verification.

Then off for Annapolis where the Congress had been sitting since November 26. At all the towns along the way the populace came out to greet him. Reaching the Maryland Capital on December 19, he found Lady Washington already had arrived from Mount Vernon. After three days of official entertainment Washington was received at the State House by the Congress exactly at noon on December 23.

Tall, dignified and erect,<sup>1</sup> he appeared imposing in his neat regimentals of buff and blue. The serenity of age added to the robust picture of poise. Instinctively a hush fell upon the assemblage as Washington arose. Officials of State, Generals of the Army, prominent citizens, and women dressed for appearance at a gorgeous court spectacle viewed the final drama. Amid scenes of stately ceremonials, as colorful and exalted as were ever witnessed in like affairs in England, Washington turned back his commission.

"I resign with satisfaction the appointment I accepted with diffidence," he announced in tones of solemnity.<sup>2</sup> The shifting scenes of the war seemed marshalling in his mind as he read.

"Having now finished the work assigned me," he concluded, "I retire from the great theatre of action; and, bidding an affectionate farewell to this august body, under whose orders I have long acted, I here offer my commission, and take my leave of all the employments of public life."

<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Lawrence noted in 1783, "the General weighs commonly about 210 pounds." Jefferson records, "his deportment easy, erect and noble." Height six feet two inches. For complete statement of physical characteristics, see Ford, Paul Leicester, *George Washington*, pp. 38-60.

<sup>2</sup> Irving, Washington, *Life of Washington* (The Stuyvesant Edition) Vol. IV, Chapter XXXIII, pp. 495-506. Also *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 461.

Gracefully stepping down from the dais, Washington was again a citizen.

"The glory of your virtues will not terminate with your military command; it will continue to animate remotest ages," responded the President.

The last act was over.

Even today, a feeling of impressiveness pervades upon entering the old State House chamber where this final scene was enacted. The high ceiling, the long windows, and the great hearth retain the colorful setting so often canvassed.

Early next morning Washington left Annapolis for Mount Vernon. He arrived on Christmas Eve, anxious to enjoy the festivities which had been missed for seven years. Candles gleamed from the many windows. Pandemonium broke out among the servants when he reached the gateway. Happy indeed was the General to resume the life of a peace-loving planter.

"I tread the paths of private life with heartfelt satisfaction," Washington wrote his beloved LaFayette, two months later. "Envious of none, I am determined to be pleased with all; and this, my dear friend, being the order of my march, I will move gently down the stream of life until I sleep with my fathers."

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The Continental Congress met from June 30 to November 4, 1783, in Nassau Hall, the oldest of the buildings at Princeton University. Princeton is ten miles north-east of Trenton, the Capital of the State, on Highway 27. Rocky Hill, where Washington wrote his Farewell to the Army, is three miles north of Princeton, on Highway 31, and is midway between Princeton

and Somerville, where Washington made his headquarters at the Cornwall House in the winter of 1778-79.

Fraunces Tavern is at the lower end of Manhattan Island, at the junction of Pearl and Broad Streets, New York. Tall buildings blot out its view of the Statue of Liberty.

Annapolis is the Capital of Maryland on Chesapeake Bay. The United States Naval Academy, established here in 1845, occupies more than one hundred acres. John Paul Jones, founder of the American Navy, is buried here. Annapolis is thirty-five miles east of Washington, D. C., on Highway 50. Highway 2 connects Baltimore with Annapolis.

## CHAPTER XVI

### WORK SONGS OF THE SLAVES

#### MOUNT VERNON ACRES

COLD winds and the snows of a severe season locked the Washingtons within the family circle at Mount Vernon for weeks after the close of the War. The General chafed under the restraint. For hours he sat dreaming the plans by which his acres were to be rejuvenated and the manor house remodeled in the majestic proportions that delight the thousands who now make up the daily pilgrimage here.

At the break of the weather during February, Washington went to Fredericksburg for a few days with his mother and to attend the Peace Ball planned in his honor. With the coming of Spring he rode over to Belvoir, the home of the Fairfaxes, where he had spent so many happy days of youth. Desolation, charred ruins, ashes stared from the deserted heap. Fire had leveled the manse during the War.

The earth, the trees, and the Potomac were still landmarks in the countryside, but all else seemed changed. His fences at Mount Vernon were down; his land was impoverished; buildings were deteriorating; his slaves were indolent; the income of his farms had dwindled.

Mount Vernon must be rehabilitated. Washington alone could recreate in wood and stone the fancies of his dreams. He must assume supervision. He would

build a greater Mount Vernon for use in the future as "the goal of domestic enjoyment."

Except for a trip to Philadelphia in May to attend a meeting of the Society of the Cincinnati, three or four horseback tours to Richmond on business, and a visit to his lands in the near West, four years were to pass in the quiet of Mount Vernon before public service recalled him. Seldom did he go fox hunting now; so many came to see him—sculptors, painters, comrades, and curious travelers—that he had little opportunity to go beyond the neighborhood. Seldom was there a meal to be enjoyed alone with Mrs. Washington.

When the harvesting of the grain was nearly finished that first year, he set out on September 1, 1784, for a tour of his holdings beyond the Alleghenies. Speculators and squatters were crowding upon his lands without the formality of inquiry or purchase. Also he planned to explore the route for a canal and road system which would interlock the Potomac and Ohio headwaters with a view to the establishment of an extensive navigation system. The West must be bound by ties of transportation to the Eastern Seaboard.

Accompanying him, on this last westward journey to be made by him, were his nephew, Bushrod Washington, who later became a Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Dr. James Craik, his personal physician from Alexandria, and three servants. Three extra horses loaded with baggage, food and wines, and camp equipment made up the entourage.<sup>1</sup>

Traveling by way of Leesburg and Hillsboro, Washington loitered along meeting old friends. He stopped for a day and a night with his brother Charles at

<sup>1</sup> Haworth, Paul Leland, *George Washington, Country Gentleman*, p 27

"Happy Retreat,"—an inviting mansion of grey stone still standing in Charles Town, a city founded by Washington's brother.<sup>1</sup> While there he probably called at the home of his dead brother Samuel, whose mansion "Harewood" was three miles out in the country.<sup>2</sup> General Daniel Morgan, who won renown at Saratoga and defeated Tarleton at the Cowpens, came over to visit and talk over the waterway project.

"I conversed a good deal with General Morgan on the waterway subject," Washington wrote in his diary.<sup>3</sup>

There were many delays. Washington tarried at Bath, the modern Berkley Springs, where he owned two thousand acres of land and several lots; stopped at Cumberland, and then took the old Braddock Trail he had known so well as an Indian fighter. He paused at the site of Fort Necessity. He owned the land and now viewed it with the eyes of a practical farmer.

"Much hay may be cut here, when the ground is laid down in grass and the upland East of the meadow is good for grain," he noted.

There was little sentiment in the return; no recorded recollection of the stirring episode of his youth.

Before he reached Miller's Run in the western part of Pennsylvania, near the present city of Connellsville,

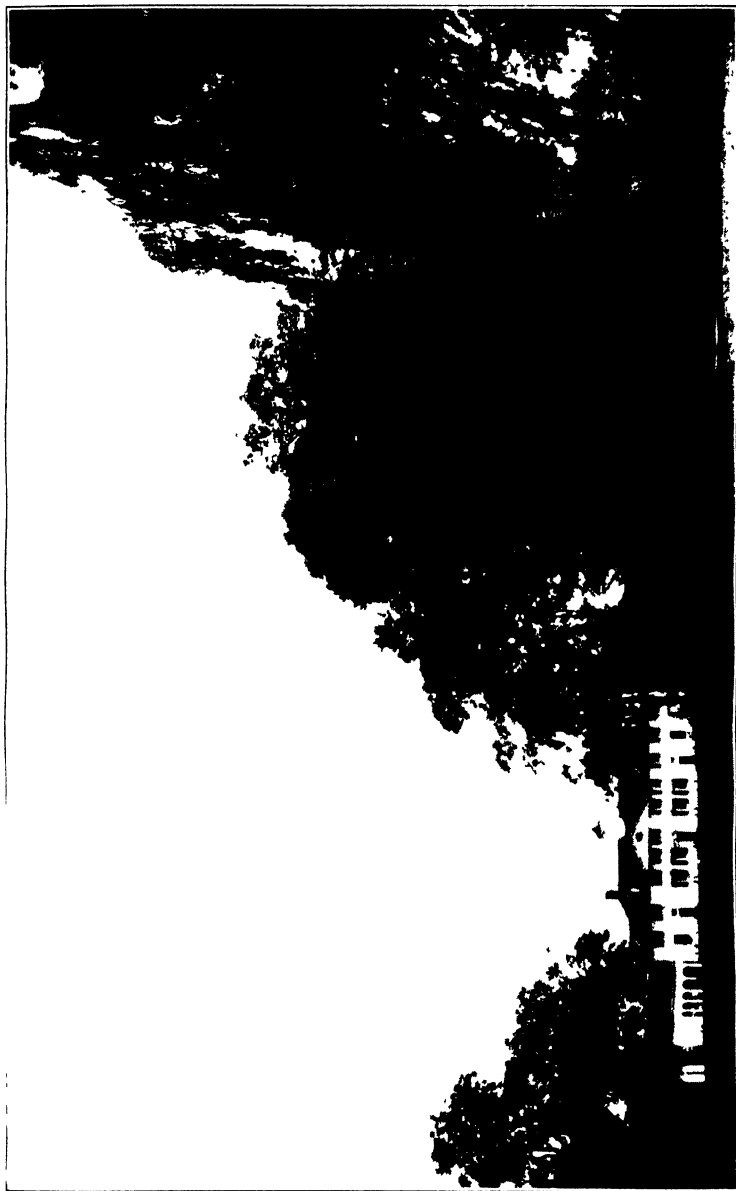
<sup>1</sup> Tablet at the entrance of "Happy Retreat".

HAPPY RETREAT NOW CALLED MORDINGTON. HOME OF COLONEL CHARLES WASHINGTON, FOUNDER OF CHARLES TOWN, VIRGINIA, (NOW WEST VIRGINIA). HIS BROTHER GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON OFTEN VISITED HIM HERE. COLONEL WASHINGTON DIED IN SEPTEMBER 1799. HE AND HIS WIFE MILDRED ARE BURIED ON THE ESTATE.

<sup>2</sup> Tablet at driveway entrance of "Harewood".

HAREWOOD ERECTED IN 1771, THE HOME OF COL. SAMUEL WASHINGTON, COUNTY LIEUTENANT. HIS BROTHER GEORGE WASHINGTON VISITED HERE AND GEN. LAFAYETTE AND LOUIS PHILLIPE OF FRANCE WERE ENTERTAINED HERE. IN THIS HOUSE JAMES MADISON AND DOLLY PAYNE TODD WERE MARRIED. SAMUEL WASHINGTON DIED IN 1781 AND IS BURIED IN THE GRAVEYARD SOUTH OF THE HOUSE.

<sup>3</sup> *National Geographic Magazine*, Vol. LXI, No. 1, p. 54.



WEST VIEW LAWN OF MOUNT VERNON





the squatters on his land learned of his approach with excitement.<sup>1</sup> Fourteen farms with buildings had been carved from his wilderness holdings. Several conferences were held. The tenants refused his terms. They also refused to move. At the end of a two-year law suit, they were finally evicted. The land then sold for twelve thousand dollars.

Before Washington started home he gathered more facts about a canal. He was searching a way to the West so as to avoid the Pennsylvania territory. The trip lasted six weeks and carried him on a journey of six hundred eighty miles. He was back at Mount Vernon on October 4.

Through the efforts of Washington, necessary legislation was secured from Maryland and Virginia to authorize the construction of a canal utilizing the Potomac. A plan for interstate control was agreed on at a conference of representatives of both states with Washington at Annapolis during the week of December 20, 1784. Adjourned meetings were held at Mount Vernon the week of March 20, 1785, where a compact was signed March 28. The Potomac Navigation Company was organized on May 17, 1785, with General Washington as President. In February, 1786, the work on the locks was begun on the Virginia side at Great Falls—the first important internal improvement to be started within the Nation. Its engineering magnitude loomed then like Muscle Shoals of the Twentieth Century. Washington was a forerunner of modern day business executives of large affairs.

The canal construction continued for years. Washington put more than ten thousand dollars of his own

<sup>1</sup> Woodward, W. E., *George Washington*, p. 394.

money into the enterprise. Funds came in so slowly that the work dragged. Never, however, did Washington lose faith in its potentialities. It was still an unfinished project when he died.

To this day the ruins of the canal trench and masonry at Great Falls remain a witness to Washington's practical skill as an engineer. The railroads finally made canal schemes impractical.<sup>1</sup>

Before Washington left for his journey to the West, General LaFayette had come from France and paid him a twelve-day visit, promising to return in November. He kept his appointment. Washington journeyed to Richmond to meet him. For two weeks the comrades of war spent their waking hours in the company of each other. The affection was mutual.<sup>2</sup> When the time came to part, Washington accompanied his guest as far as Annapolis. Returning home, he wrote him a prophetic farewell note:

"In the moment of our separation, upon the road as I travelled, and every hour since, I have felt all that love, respect and attachment for you, with which length of years, close connection, and your merits have inspired me. I often asked myself, as our carriages separated, whether that was the last sight I ever should have of you. And though I wished to answer No, my fears answered Yes. I called to mind the days of my youth, and found they had long since fled to return no more; that I was now descending the hill I had been fifty-two years in climbing, and that, though I was blessed with a good constitution, I was of a short lived family, and might soon expect to be entombed in the mansion of my fathers. These thoughts darkened the shades, and gave

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol III, p 158

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol III, p 224

a gloom to the picture, and consequently to my prospect of ever seeing you again."

Time verified the truth of the premonition, although he was to live for fifteen more years. Forty years later LaFayette returned for a final visit to America and paused at Mount Vernon, where, touched with mixed remembrances, he placed in sadness a wreath on the tomb and received in token a lock of the General's hair.

Every year immediately after the War saw some improvement of the Mount Vernon gardens and house. Alterations enlarged the library and dining room at one end and placed a banquet hall at the other.<sup>1</sup> A dry well for ice was excavated; the paving of the long piazza, where Washington and the family spent so many hours in Summer watching the sweep of the Potomac, was renewed; the carriage drive was completed; the lawn was planted with trees gathered from his swamps and fields or contributed by friends; the paddock for deer was fenced and stocked; a pen was made for the Chinese pheasants, French partridges, and guinea pigs received as gifts. Before Washington was recalled to public service, Mount Vernon had been revamped.

The hidden shadows veiled the millions who were to come in homage in the centuries ahead. The scene was now set for the development of a national shrine of the first magnitude.

There seemed no end to the General's correspondence in those years following the War. People asked Washington for advice on all sorts of subjects; appeals were made for charity; more and more his opinion was sought by leaders who saw the growing feebleness of government. Tobias Lear, of Portsmouth, New Hamp-

<sup>1</sup> Ford, Paul Leicester, *Ibid.*, p. 114.

shire, a Harvard graduate, was employed in 1786 to act as tutor to the Custis children and assist with the letters. Soon he became indispensable. He remained with the Washingtons until the General's death.<sup>1</sup>

Lodge activities increased. Initiated before his majority into the Masonic Lodge at Fredericksburg, he was now elected a charter member of the lodge at Alexandria. The ritual impressed him deeply. Profound lessons were revealed in the exemplifications of the ancient craft. Washington was chosen Worshipful Master in 1787, and served two years. Today the chair in which he sat and the apron he wore are cherished by the lodge as prized memorials. Pictures of the period, showing him dressed in Masonic regalia, adorn lodge rooms all over America.<sup>2</sup>

The post-war period brought personal problems. Labor on the five farms gave Washington many worries. His fondest hope was to be thought of as the first farmer in America. Without doubt he was the wealthiest. His annual income ranged from ten to fifteen thousand dollars. The holding of large land areas was the symbol of power and wealth in his day; today it is the domination of the natural resources—water power, coal, oil, iron, and steel.

Daily, Washington rode over his acres to be certain that the work progressed. Under his management there was neither want nor waste at Mount Vernon. He checked up his white overseers to see that the laborers were at their allotted duties. Even indentured servants and regular employees presented a problem. The

<sup>1</sup> Haworth, Paul Leland, *Ibid*, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Washington's Home and Fraternal Life, History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 175.

men craved liquor. Hiring a gardener of dissolute habits, Washington agreed that if he would remain sober, while at work, he would be permitted holiday spees. The contract provided that the gardener was to have "four dollars at Christmas with which he may be drunk for four days and four nights; two dollars at Easter to effect the same purpose; two dollars at Whitsuntide to be drunk for two days; a dram in the morning, a drink of grog at dinner at noon."<sup>1</sup>

Washington soon learned that many of his slaves were lazy; that others pretended illness. They shirked at their tasks; they stole from his stores; they pilfered his wines. At times corporal punishment was necessary. Washington's journals during this period are a running comment on the increasing difficulties of using unwilling labor.

Some slaves ran away, compelling him to offer rewards. One was so ugly he must be sold. It required sixty-seven slaves to do the work at the Mansion House farm. There were three thousand two hundred acres under cultivation; fifty-four draught horses to be groomed daily; three hundred head of livestock to be tended. The outdoor buildings for the use of the spinners, washers, wagoners, indicate the variety of occupations in which they were employed. Some worked in the flour mill. "Billy" Lee, Washington's personal valet, attained distinction as a member of the household.

In 1786 there were two hundred sixteen slaves on the whole estate. Many, it must be said, were faithful servants. Living in little huts on the five farms, the slaves found many joys. At night they fiddled and

<sup>1</sup> Ford, Paul Leicester, *Ibid*, p. 158.

danced; sang and made merry. With them Washington was just, but he was not indulgent. Through the century the tongue of scandal has been glib, but history finds his conduct with slaves exemplary.<sup>1</sup> He provided for their care in old age. But he came to loathe slavery, and in his will ordered their manumission after Mrs. Washington's death.

Down the lane past the barns and beyond the tomb, the Potomac Valley lies low and hidden in the trees. The farm lands stretch away interruptingly. These were the distant acres once worked by the slaves; the echoes of their songs resound no more. In a corner overlooking the boat landing I came upon a white slab marker inscribed with this epitaph:

IN MEMORY  
OF THE  
MANY FAITHFUL  
COLORED SERVANTS  
OF THE  
WASHINGTON FAMILY  
BURIED AT  
MOUNT VERNON  
FROM  
1760 TO 1860  
MANY UNIDENTIFIED GRAVES  
SURROUND THIS SPOT

"The faithful slaves remain with the General," the colored attendant at the tomb remarked, observing me copy the inscription. "The same old trees shade the graves of both."

Each year after the War, leisure for Washington was more frequently disturbed. Increasing political troubles provoked his quiet. Bickering arose between

<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick, John C., *The Washington Slanders, George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, pp 314-319

the States. Riots occurred in the cities. Shay's Rebellion of debt-ridden farmers broke out in Massachusetts in 1786-87. The government was palsied. These few years are known as "The Critical Period of American History." Strong men appealed to Washington to lend his influence to stabilize affairs.

"Influence is no government," he responded in a letter to Henry Lee, October 31, 1786.<sup>1</sup> "Let us have a government by which our lives, liberties, and properties will be secured, or let us know the worst at once."

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 70.



## CHAPTER XVII

### MELLOWED PAGES OF A NATION'S CHARTER

#### WASHINGTON

HELD fast in marble frames under an amber-colored glass and displayed to the public only in the presence of an attendant are two documents once dear to George Washington.

One is the original Declaration of Independence—the “Birth Certificate of the Nation”—written while Washington was in the field but established through his generalship.

The other, the Constitution of the United States, was done under his watchfulness as President of the Convention which drafted it.

One is the decalogue wherever Liberty lifts its head; the other is the tested creed and charter by which a republic may surmount chaos. Both were debated and signed in the hallowed precincts of Independence Hall at Philadelphia; both glorified possessions were brought to the Federal City when the government was moved in 1800; both are now displayed on an altar in the transcendent colorings and lights of the Library of Congress.

To come before the table which holds the Constitution; to examine carefully the words written so clearly with quill; to run the finger down the names of the

thirty-nine signers,<sup>1</sup> topped by the bold signature of George Washington, is to experience a soul-quickenning throb of the heart.

Behind the mellowed pages of the Constitution are marshaled the praise and the progress of the Nation. As I pondered, the names of its many defenders came beating before the mind demanding recognition—Marshall and Monroe; Jefferson and Jackson; Webster and Clay; Lincoln and Grant—a few of the towering figures in the galaxy.

“When Ramsay McDonald of England came here he was surprised to find that the documents had faded so much,” explained the cultured old gentleman who guards the sanctuary, while I lingered. “I do not think he really understood that they were under the yellow gelatine glass to prevent fading. McDonald said that the Magna Charta, that great document of Liberty drafted in England in 1215, was much clearer. I saw it a few years ago, and I do not agree. Its wording, too, is often indistinct.”

“What single fact seems of the greatest moment to the thousands who come here?” I asked.

“It’s the legibility of the Constitution,” he responded. “With all of our education we can’t write as our Fathers did with quills. It is difficult to read anyone’s writing these days unless it is done on a typewriter.”

The keeper said that the oldest signer of the Constitution was Benjamin Franklin, who had passed his eighty-first birthday; that Washington’s signature and name are the best known; that the general provisions of

<sup>1</sup> *Formation of the Union, House Document No. 398*, Published by Order of Congress in 1927, contains every document in the building of the government, together with a reprint of the exact notes of Delegate James Madison. Invaluable to the student of this period.

the document were in the main suggested by the thoughtful James Madison, later President; but that the beautiful English of the document was the terse, cogent phraseology of Gouverneur Morris.<sup>1</sup>

On the day that a committee was appointed by the Second Continental Congress, assembled at Philadelphia, to draft the Declaration of Independence, another was named to draw up Articles of Confederation as a Central Government for the states.<sup>2</sup> Eight days after the signing of the Declaration a draft of governmental provisions was submitted.

Several of its planks stirred long and bitter debates in Congress. States jealous of their powers were unwilling to surrender the right of taxation to the general government. The Articles, approved by Congress a year and a half later, on November 15, 1777, were so weak that their failure as an agency of government was universally predicted. Meantime, Washington and Hamilton pointed out their defects. Three and one-half years were required by the states to ratify. When the innocuous covenant went into effect, March 1, 1781, the only change foisted upon the Congress was the fact that a written Constitution guided its movements.<sup>3</sup> The government could beg, but it could not tax; it could legislate, but it could not enforce its mandates; it could resolve, but the states could ignore the bluster. Amendment could only be made by unanimous consent of the states—an impossible attainment. The Central Government remained weak and inadequate.

<sup>1</sup> Roosevelt, Theodore, *Gouverneur Morris* (American Statesmen Series), p.

143.

<sup>2</sup> Hart, Albert Bushnell, *Formation of the Union, 1750-1829* (Epochs of American History Series), p. 93

<sup>3</sup> Full text, *Articles of Confederation, Formation of the Union, Ibid.*, p. 27.

Within five years men so despaired of its effectiveness that monarchy threatened. A craze of paper money swept nine of the states, tumbling their credit in ruin; tariff walls were built up between states; chickens from New Jersey and cabbage raised in Connecticut must entail a custom duty to enter New York; trade boycotts and retaliations flowered; the debt of the War went unpaid. Congress asked the states for two million dollars to meet its obligations; only four hundred thousand dollars was remitted. There were many disorders. The commercial life of the new Nation faltered.<sup>1</sup> Numerous pamphlets appeared demanding reform. The times became uncertain. In May, 1786, Charles Pinckney told his colleagues that "Congress must be invested with more powers or the Federal Government must fall."

Washington was already on the firing line.<sup>2</sup> The conference of delegates from Maryland and Virginia at Mount Vernon to plan the Potomac Canal route talked over trade problems. Men of affairs were worried; something must be done. The Mount Vernon meeting resulted in the Virginia Legislature inviting the other states to a commercial conference to be held at Annapolis on the first Monday of September, 1786.

Even this effort was a disappointment. Only five states responded. Boldly, however, the delegates petitioned the Congress to call a Convention of states to amend and strengthen the Articles of Confederation. Congress ignored the suggestion for a time. Conditions did not improve. When the call was finally sent forth,

<sup>1</sup> McMaster, John B., *History of the People of the United States*, Vol. I, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Henry Knox on Crisis of the Confederation, December 26, 1786, reprinted in *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 463.

it made no acknowledgment of the Annapolis demand. By it, the states were asked to send representatives to a conference to meet at Philadelphia on May 14, 1787, for the purpose of revising the Articles. All responded except Rhode Island.

Reluctantly Washington agreed to attend as one of the delegates from Virginia. He left Mount Vernon by carriage on May 9 and his entrance into Philadelphia was announced by the ringing of bells and the applause of a concourse of people.

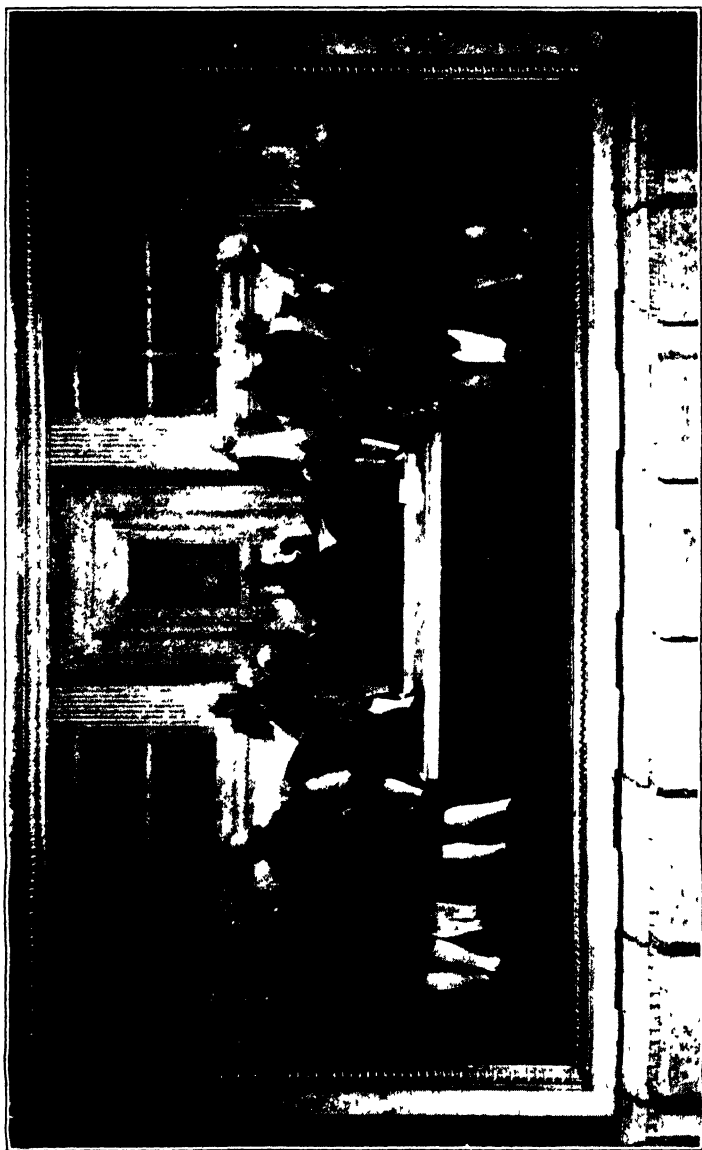
"Kindly pressed by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morris to lodge with them, I did so," Washington recorded in his diary. "Waited on the President, Doctr. Franklin, as soon as I got to town. On my arrival the bells were chimed."

Lack of a quorum delayed the organization of the Convention until May 25, "when by unanimous vote I was called up to the chair as President." The meetings were secret. Not a mention of the stirring debates appeared in Washington's diary. The notes of James Madison, published many years later, are the basis of most of the knowledge of the Convention's activities.<sup>1</sup>

Like the First Constitutional Congress that assembled at Philadelphia in 1774, the members of the Constitutional Convention included many of the ablest and most brilliant minds in the states. The delegates were mostly from the wealthy class; many were lawyers; about half of them had a college education. Benjamin Franklin was the most famous; James Madison probably the most active.

New York sent Alexander Hamilton, the outstand-

<sup>1</sup> Matteson, David M., *Washington and the Constitution, History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol 1, p. 76.



FRAMING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES  
FROM A PAINTING BY ALBERT HERTEL AT STATE CAPITOL, MADISON, WISCONSIN



ing advocate of a strong Central Government, as one member in its representation; Elbridge Gerry and Rufus King, both former members of Congress, were on the Massachusetts delegation; from Delaware came John Dickinson; from South Carolina, Charles Pinckney; the venerable Benjamin Franklin was named by Pennsylvania; Washington and Madison, George Mason and George Wythe were on the delegation from Virginia. There was not an idealist in the group. Jefferson, the dreamer of democracies, was absent as Ambassador to France. It was probably the most remarkable body of men ever gathered in America.<sup>1</sup>

Virginia delegates presented, through Edmund Randolph, a convincing orator, a plan drawn by Madison for a complete new form of government. This became the ground work of the Convention's deliberations and formed the warp of the new Constitution. William Paterson, eleven times Attorney General of New Jersey, brought in a scheme called the New Jersey plan for revising the Articles of Confederation.<sup>2</sup> This was quickly disposed of by the delegates bent on discovering some new form of central authority.

Called together for the specific purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation, the Convention then did the "unconstitutional thing" of disregarding the call. It drafted an entirely new scheme of government.

As the debate advanced, the American experiences of state government were applied to the problems: The federal courts were created on the basis of Colonial courts; a two-house Legislature was the rule in Co-

<sup>1</sup> McLaughlin, A. C., *The Confederation and the Constitution*, *Ibid*, pp. 184-190; McMaster, John B., *Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 418.

<sup>2</sup> Farrand, Max, *The Fathers of the Constitution* (The Chronicles of America Series), p. 118.



lonial times. Sometimes the differences of opinion were so pronounced that agreement seemed hopeless. Once, when progress was blocked for a week, Franklin appealed to his colleagues to see if harmony could not be restored by opening the daily sessions with prayer.

Four compromises saved the work of the Convention from being wrecked:

1. The powers of the federal government were enumerated and the states were to have all not specifically granted.

2. Each state, regardless of size, was to have two representatives in the Senate; members of the Lower House were to be chosen on the basis of population. Slaves were to be counted as only three-fifths of the number in apportioning representation and direct taxes.

3. Congress was given power to pass navigation acts. Slave trade was authorized for twenty years.

4. The executive power was placed in a President, who was to be chosen by a system that left him more responsible to individual states than to the people.

Most of the delegates feared a direct vote of the people. They squirmed and twisted to find a way to thwart the majority will. They interposed the Electoral College between the people and the Presidency.

"A popular election is radically vicious due to the ignorance of the people," Gerry of Massachusetts shouted as he brought his fist down on the table.

"The people cannot know and judge the character of candidates," Gouverneur Morris rejoined.

He added that the rural vote was to be dreaded; prophesied that if Western backwoods people ever got the power into their own hands, it would ruin the East. The fetish of wealth dominated the Constitution-

makers. Forty of the fifty-five delegates were the holders of unredeemed public certificates. More than thirty held or dealt in public lands. Business demanded stability of government.

Madison's notes record Washington speaking but once in the more than three months of session. So eloquent was the address that some historians describe it as apocryphal.<sup>1</sup> Washington urged a smaller number of people as a basis for representation in Congress. The records disclose that he favored a single executive; was against the election of the Executive by Congress; voted for an export tax requiring a two-thirds vote; and was against a two-thirds vote of both houses overruling a veto.<sup>2</sup> He was in favor of a strong centralized government; his writings indicate his belief in representative government. Even though he was not active in debate, his influence and judgment were effective. Day after day he sat for hours listening. Sometimes he rested his head in his hand to catch the remotest remarks. His coolness as a presiding officer held the Convention in check when the debate grew stormy. His austerity reconciled many differences.

When the drafting of the document was completed, it was decided that it was to become effective when nine states had ratified. On the day of the final session Washington recorded in his diary:

"Monday (Sept.) 17th. Met in Convention, when the Constitution received the unanimous assent of 11 States and Colo. Hamilton's from New York (the only delegate from thence in Convention), and was subscribed to by every Member present except Govr.

<sup>1</sup> *Formation of the Union, Madison's Notes, Ibid.*, p. 741.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 76.

Randolph and Colo. Mason from Virginia, and Mr. Gerry from Massachusetts.

"The business being thus closed, the Members adjourned to the City Tavern, dined together and took a cordial leave of each other; after which I returned to my lodgings, did some business with, and received the papers from the Secretary of the Convention, and retired to meditate on the momentous w(or)k which had been executed, after not less than five, for a large part of the time Six, and sometimes 7 hours sitting every day, (except) Sundays and the ten days adjournment to give a comee. opportunity and time to arrange the business, for more than four months."

The Journal of the Convention was considered so secret that a resolution was passed intrusting it to Washington until the new government should direct that it be placed in other hands. The Convention also commanded him to transmit the Constitution in a letter to the Congress for submission to the states. He wrote

"In all our deliberations on this subject we kept steadily in our view, that which appears to us the greatest interest of every true American, the consolidation of our Union, in which is involved our prosperity felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence. This important consideration, seriously and deeply impressed on our minds, led each state in the Convention to be less rigid on points of inferior magnitude, than might have been otherwise expected; and thus the Constitution, which we now present, is the result of spirit of amity, and of that mutual deference and concession which the peculiarity of our political situation rendered indispensable.

"That it will meet the full and entire approbation of every state is not perhaps to be expected; but each will doubtless consider, that had her interest been alone consulted, the consequences might have been particula

ly disagreeable or injurious to others; that it is liable to as few exceptions as could reasonably have been expected, we hope and believe; that it may promote the lasting welfare of that country so dear to us all, and secure her freedom and happiness, is our most ardent wish."

As the hour of adjournment arrived, the aged Benjamin Franklin, now making his last public appearance in one of the great dramas of the country, arose and pointed to a picture of the sun painted on a canvas behind the chair of the President.

"I have often and often, in the course of the session and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that behind the President, without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting," he commented, "but now at length I have the happiness to know that it is a rising and not a setting sun."<sup>1</sup>

Although Congress submitted the Constitution to the states on September 28, 1787, they were slow to ratify. Sharp differences of opinion arose. Every state was a battle ground. Almost a year had elapsed before the necessary approval was given. Delaware was the first. Had it not been for Washington's influence, Virginia might have defeated the approval. At the Richmond Convention, Patrick Henry attacked the document and the motive of its signers.

"Even from that illustrious man who saved us by his valor, I would have a reason for his conduct," he declared, in a sly reference to Washington. "What right had they to say, 'We, the people?' Who authorized them to speak the language of, 'We, the people,' instead of, 'We, the states'?"

<sup>1</sup> Fisher, Sydney George, *The True Benjamin Franklin*, p. 362.

On the eve of the baptism of the new Nation, the doctrine of state rights arose to disturb the christening. Criticism became so sharp that Hamilton and Madison defended the document in a series of articles that have become known as "The Federalist." These are still invaluable as a treatise on government. Unknown to Virginia, which finally took favorable action on June 26, 1788, New Hampshire was the ninth state to ratify. New York fell into line one month later. Rhode Island and North Carolina did not come in until long after Washington had been inaugurated as President. On September 13, 1788, Congress issued the call for the election of a President under the new Constitution.

Even with the necessary ratification there was still doubt as to the selection of the first President. Washington could have the honor if he would accept. Among the Colonial leaders military achievement had made him the most popular. When he hesitated, Madison paid him a week's visit and Hamilton urged that he state his position.

"On the delicate subject with which you conclude your letter, I can say nothing," Washington responded,<sup>1</sup> "because the event alluded to may never happen, and because, in case it should occur, it would be a point of prudence to defer forming one's ultimate and irrevocable decision, so long as new data might be afforded for one to act with the greater wisdom and propriety. I would not wish to conceal my prevailing sentiment from you; for you know me well enough, my good Sir, to be persuaded, that I am not guilty of affectation

<sup>1</sup> Full Text of Letter, *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p 464.

when I tell you, that it is my great and sole desire to live and die in peace and retirement on my own farm. Were it even indispensable, a different line of conduct should be adopted, while you and some others who are acquainted with my heart would acquit, the world and posterity might possibly accuse me (of) inconsistency and ambition. Still I hope I shall always possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain (what I consider the most enviable of all titles), the character of an honest man, . . . .”

Washington did not seek; neither did he refuse. Leaders of the states understood. While he went on with the work of his farms, they proceeded to draft their modern Cincinnatus for the Presidency.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### LINGERING TOUCHES OF REVOLUTIONARY DAYS

#### FREDERICKSBURG

SECLUDED behind a white picketed fence, one block off the main thoroughfare in Fredericksburg, Virginia, is a little garden glistening with green hedge rows and old-fashioned, vari-colored flowers. Its worn, red-brick walk meanders around a clump of bushes and then comes to a sudden end at a partition fence. Out in the opening is a sun dial, which has told the hours for a century and a half. An age-old Revolutionary cottage, grimly dressed with white paint, crowds the sidewalk where the narrow pathway begins. This was the home of Mary Ball Washington, and the place where Washington came to see his mother for the last time after he learned that he had been elected President.

Than this home and garden no place on the broad highway between Mount Vernon and Williamsburg was visited oftener by George Washington. Two years before the Revolution, he purchased the place because it adjoined Kenmore, the palatial brick residence of his sister, Betty Fielding Lewis. In the intervening spaces between the two homes, now elbowed by two blocks of city residences, he planted shrubs and thirteen horse-chestnut trees—one for each of the thirteen Colonies. Of these, only one surgeon-scarred patriarch survives.

When Washington's mother moved reluctantly to this home at the outbreak of the War, it became at once a scene of events. LaFayette paused there one day to pay homage. With each turn of war events, townspeople gathered for a word of news. And then, in February, 1784, as a climax, General Washington arrived to celebrate victory and to appear publicly for the last time with his mother at a Peace Ball.

Each day, in reminiscent tones, the story of Fredericksburg is retold by its people. Although the Civil War added new glories,<sup>1</sup> it is the fadeless memories of Washington's comings that surge to their lips. Probably no city in the United States cherishes so ardently such a glorious past and has retained so indelibly the touch of Revolutionary days through the smoke of wars and the elements of time.

Fredericksburg sits like an old home by the roadside before which the panorama of Colonial days and the Revolution Era surged back and forth for review. Its memory has been keen and retentive. When all hope of reconciliation with Great Britain had vanished, it saw, in the late summer of 1774, Patrick Henry and Edmund Pendleton pass through the streets on their way to the First Continental Congress, which was to assemble at Philadelphia. Other distinguished personages were to follow. George Washington had gone. His departure and the part he would play in the crisis were daily subjects of conversation. Virginia leadership had made Fredericksburg bold. The apothecary shop of Hugh Mercer was a gathering center for the

<sup>1</sup> Fredericksburg was the scene of two bloody battles and a devastating bombardment, while within a radius described by a half circle extending West for twelve miles were fought the battles of Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, Bloody Angle, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Todds Tavern, and others of less importance



rebellious.<sup>1</sup> Independence was discussed openly.

Within a few hours after news of the battle of Lexington had been received, six hundred men gathered at Rising Sun Tavern, a frequent meeting place for Washington, George Mason, James Monroe, Richard Henry Lee, and Thomas Jefferson, and there was signed a Declaration of Revolt, and the citizens made ready for the war.<sup>2</sup>

Washington had sensed coming events. Early in the Spring of 1775 he visited his mother at Ferry Farm, just across the Rappahannock River, where she had lived since the death of her husband in 1743. After much argument, he persuaded her to take up her residence in Fredericksburg, close to the home of her daughter, Betty. She was stubborn about moving. She thought the war would be far away, and that the Virginia country estates would never be invaded. She liked the old farm and felt like a deserter about leaving it. Finally she consented to go. She took her old servants with her—Black Stephen and his wife, two youths, a girl named Little Bet. For years on fair days she made a daily drive with horse and phaeton to visit the old farmstead.<sup>3</sup>

Never has the public interest which clung to Washington's mother in these Revolutionary times receded. Her home and that of her daughter, Betty, have been preserved and are still open to the public. Tall clocks, stiff furniture, canopied beds, foot warmers, and paintings of austere personages which adorn the walls speak,

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Mercer enlisted early. He became a gallant Revolutionary officer and was killed in the battle of Princeton, 1777. The government has erected a monument to his memory in the public square. His apothecary shop still stands.

<sup>2</sup> Fleming, Vivian M., *Historic Periods of Fredericksburg, 1608-1861*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, Nancy Byrd, *The Mother of Washington*, p. 222.



GUNSTON HALL ON THE POTOMAC, HOME OF GEORGE MASON



however, of departed generations. Outside there are snug gardens and aging trees and winding pathways which remind the visitor of the human side of these Washingtons.

There seems to be no end of old places to see and visit. Many steps must be taken to follow the footfalls of the Great. My heart thumped with excitement as I strolled over the grounds and under the venerable trees of Kenmore. It must have been a lively scene when Washington's sister, Betty, and Fielding Lewis, her husband, lived there with their eleven children. Lewis was a manufacturer of guns for the Revolution. Even red-brick walls can take on warmth and affection if permitted to tell a story, as only these bricks could, of what has gone on within the range of their immutable silence.

I approached the worn stone steps to the entrance. The wide, heavy door swung back on its strong strap hinges as it had opened so often to welcome Washington. Within one senses a feeling of home-coziness. I sat down at the table under that high ceiling, where the Washingtons—mother, sister, and brother—had so often dined. Some of the dishes used at their meals were in the china closet at the head of the table. What family secrets had here been told; what plans had been made, and what joy there was at these reunions around this board of the family circle!

Betty was the image of her brother, and in a jovial mood she would don the soldier's hat, then strike the military pose which made a visitor think that the General suddenly had returned.

I went about the mellow-scented rooms, fanned by the breezes at an open window, as if guided by him

who had come in to tell of the surrender of Yorktown. Pausing at the mantel, it was almost as though he, instead of the guide, were telling the story of the fable, done in fresco from his design by Hessian soldiers captured at Trenton, of the fox, the crow, and the piece of cheese placed there against the perils of flattery.

Overhead were other designs. The decorative ceilings were also of Hessian artisanship.<sup>1</sup>

"That monument across the boulevard was erected by the women of the Nation to Washington's mother," said the attendant, pointing across the way. "Back of it will be found the ledge of rock where Washington's mother went on fair days to read her Bible and pray for the safe return of her son during the War."

Hastily I left Kenmore. So intent had I been on getting to Meditation Rock that I had not noticed how the sun had suddenly flooded the little valley before me. The "prayer rock" is a piece of jagged sandstone which juts out over the ravine. I stood on the spot where Mary Washington's chair must have rested. Up the valley were gorgeous shades, and the red earth of the Virginia landscape splashed the green hillsides.

A spreading oak, its bole deeply wrinkled, shadows the ridge. What serenity was here! And what a place for meditation and communion with God!

In my mind I returned with Mary Ball Washington from her prayers. She hobbled along on her gold-headed cane to Kenmore and passed down the narrow streets to her own home. The old grandfather clock was still ticking, as it had for centuries. Out in the garden we went, as if she were to show us the place

<sup>1</sup> Sawyer, Joseph D., *George Washington*, Vol. I, p. 126.

where her son had found her after the victory of Yorktown.

Accompanied by a staff of officers he arrived in Fredericksburg on November 11, 1781. Unattended, the General walked to the unpretentious little cottage.

"George," she called as he entered. Forthwith they talked of her health, of old friends, and of the neighbors. Not one word of his honors and glories of the War! Then out into the garden he had helped to plan. There were so many things to tell; so many new shrubs and bushes to see. In another hour he was gone.

Even in his absence, Washington's mother caused him worry. As she grew old she became eccentric. Sometimes she appealed to her neighbors for help.<sup>1</sup> Out of her suggestions a movement was started to give her a pension by the State. When Washington heard of this, he was mortified. No such relief was needed, and he promptly notified the authorities that, as he had already given her a home, he was willing to share his last shilling with her. She was saving and talked as if poor. Washington never visited her without giving her money, although at no time did she actually need it.

On a later occasion, after the close of the War, a two-day celebration was held, on Friday and Saturday, February 13 and 14, 1784, closing with a Peace Ball held in Fredericksburg. To this day it has remained the greatest event in the social history of the city. In reply to the address congratulating him, Washington said:

"The reflection, however, of having met the congratulative smiles and approbation of my fellow citizens—and my sensibility of them is heightened by their

<sup>1</sup> Turner, Nancy Byrd, *Ibid*, p. 242.

coming from the respectable inhabitants of the place of my growing infancy, and the honorable mention which is made of my reverend mother; by whose maternal hand (early deprived of a father) I was led from childhood."

The guides about Fredericksburg seem to emphasize a fact, which appears to be well authenticated in history, that many times during the War couriers would arrive with messages for Washington's mother. The crowd would follow close. Into her pocket she would tuck the message, and not one word would be given to the curious. Often her daughter Betty would grow excited and on one occasion is said to have demanded to know the contents.

"The sister of the commanding General should be an example of faith and fortitude," was her mother's only response.<sup>1</sup>

At last the War was over and, in the Autumn of 1784, General LaFayette arrived for the sole purpose of paying his respects to Washington's mother. LaFayette came unannounced. A son of Betty was chosen to guide him.

"Grandma, this is General LaFayette," he said, approaching Mary Washington through the side gate in the garden.

She had been cutting some vines. Laying aside her shears, she turned toward the visitor.

"Ah, Marquis! You have come to see an old woman. But come in. I can make you welcome without changing my dress. I am glad to see you. I have often heard George speak of you."

<sup>1</sup> *Historic Gardens of Virginia*, The Jamestown Garden Club, p. 207; *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol III, p. 78.



FRONT VIEW OF THE HOME OF WASHINGTON'S MOTHER



MEDITATION ROCK





Together they entered the home.

"I have seen the only Roman mother living at this day," LaFayette is credited with saying on departure.

During the next five years Washington visited his mother whenever it was possible for him to do so. At the time of his election to the Presidency, his mother was suffering from a disease which it was realized would prove fatal. As soon as he was certain of the election results, he proceeded to Fredericksburg, arriving there on March 7, 1789. It was the last time Washington saw his mother. Kneeling at her knee, he is said to have asked her blessing.<sup>1</sup>

"You will see me no more," are said to have been her farewell words. "Go, George! Fulfill the high destinies which Heaven has assigned you. Go! and may Heaven's and your mother's blessings be with you always."

I stood in the quiet of the room where occurred that sad parting. The hearth was cold. The sunlight stole faintly through the green-shuttered windows. Down in the chair he may have occupied for the final interview, I sat gazing at the walls. They gave no message. Outside I heard the rustle of feet and then voices. Others were coming to commune with the spirits of the departed.

Five months after the interview, President Washington received word at New York of the death of his mother, which had occurred on August 25, 1789, in her eighty-first year.<sup>2</sup>

Over her grave an obelisk has been raised—the first

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 78

<sup>2</sup> Sherman, Mrs. John Dickinson, "*The Mother of Washington*," Radio Address, Washington, D. C., May 11, 1930.

ever erected to a woman by women. Inscribed on its face, I read these five words:

MARY  
THE MOTHER OF  
WASHINGTON

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Fredericksburg is midway between Washington, D. C., and Richmond, Virginia, on Route 1, Jefferson-Davis Highway. It is about fifty miles south of Mount Vernon.

Shrines at Fredericksburg include: The Mary Washington house, where Washington's mother lived from 1775-1789; a famous horse-chestnut tree planted by George Washington in memory of the thirteen original Colonies; Rising Sun Tavern, where Washington entertained his contemporaries; old Masonic Lodge that made Washington a Mason in 1752; and an old slave block.

## CHAPTER XIX

### TURMOILS OF A NATION'S BIRTH

#### NEW YORK

"ALTHOUGH I cannot conceal, yet, I cannot describe the painful emotions I felt in being called upon to determine whether I would accept or refuse the Presidency of the United States."

This is the way General George Washington, the planter, began a communication<sup>1</sup> to the mayor and people of his home town of Alexandria, announcing his acceptance of the Presidential trust. For months he foresaw that the invitation to serve would come. Before the climactic hour for the Nation had arrived, he had considered the seriousness of the impending call. Duty decreed that he could not fail his country now. Earlier honors in life he had sought and welcomed. Then he was young and active. When he was summoned from Mount Vernon to assume the Presidency of four million people, profound sorrow entered his heart. Now he was fifty-seven—tired and blind to glory. Mount Vernon never looked so consolingly dear to him.

"For myself the delay may be compared to a reprieve," Washington wrote to Henry Knox a month before the official notification. Mrs. Washington shared his disinclinations.

<sup>1</sup> Gazette of the United States, New York, May 2, 1789.

Meantime, the Continental Congress meeting at New York on February 4, 1789, had canvassed the electoral vote which disclosed General Washington the unanimous selection for President. John Adams of Massachusetts was chosen Vice-President by a plurality vote. When the result of the proceedings was officially announced on March 4 at the organization of the Senate,<sup>1</sup> Charles Thomson, for fifteen years Secretary of the Continental Congress, was named to deliver the certificate of election to Washington. He arrived at Mount Vernon on April 14.

Received in the dining room<sup>2</sup> under the beautiful ornamental ceiling of stucco and surrounded by the gifts of LaFayette and the French soldiers, just as the room is arranged today, Washington modestly accepted the certificate with formality. He was pale, tense, and agitated. His shoulders drooped.

"I am so much affected by this fresh proof of my country's esteem and confidence that silence can best express my gratitude," he responded. "While I realize the arduous nature of the task which is imposed upon me and feel my own inability to perform it, I wish that there may not be reason for regretting the choice; for, indeed, all I can promise is to accomplish that which can be done by an honest zeal."

Anticipating the urgency for an early departure, Washington said he would be ready "day after tomorrow." The month before he had paid a farewell visit to his mother; had reluctantly borrowed five hundred pounds to discharge his debts and to pay his expenses, and had given final instructions to his farm manager

<sup>1</sup> Maclay, William, *Sketches of Debate in the First Senate of the United States*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Little, Shelby, *George Washington*, p. 357.

and overseers in their duties.<sup>1</sup> All was in readiness on the morning of April 16.

"About ten o'clock," he wrote in his diary, "I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity, and with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York in company with Mr. Thomson and Col. Humphreys, with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its calls, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

Sorrowing friends from Alexandria and old neighbors from the vicinity met his carriage at the West Lodge Gates. He paused to receive their kind words. His face was white and stern. He had steeled his nerves for this parting with the home folk.

"Unutterable sensations," said he, in acknowledging the expressions of good will offered by the mayor, "must then be left to more expressive silence, while from an aching heart I bid you all, my affectionate friends and kind neighbors, farewell."

Then began a colorful journey, the like of which had never before been witnessed in America. Since the War, Washington had grown in popularity. The inaugural route to New York became an exultant procession. Everywhere the elated people turned out. Farmers and their children waved to him from their roadside homes; the cities welcomed him with jubilation. Before he arrived at New York on April 23, he was worn with the many felicitations.<sup>2</sup>

Stories of the spectacular scenes on that tour read like the legends of homage and pride paid by the

<sup>1</sup> Showalter, William Joseph, *The Travels of George Washington*, The National Geographic Magazine for January, 1932, p. 60

<sup>2</sup> Maclay, William, *Ibid*, p. 9.

Greeks to Ulysses. At Chester his admirers presented him with a white horse upon which he rode into Philadelphia at the head of a long trailing escort. Passing under a canopy of fresh-cut laurel at Gray's Ferry on the Schuylkill, just at the outskirts of the Quaker City, a wreath was dropped on Washington's head, duplicating the scene when Queen Elizabeth entered London. Triumphal arches of green and colorings frequently spanned the traveled way. Thirteen girls in white—one for each state—welcomed him to Trenton. A circle bore the inscription: "The hero who defended the mothers December 26, 1776, will protect the daughters." Leading the way, women sang an ode to his heroism. His pathway was strewn with spring flowers.<sup>1</sup>

A barge draped and cushioned with rich velvets of red, and rowed by thirteen oarsmen singing as do the Volga boatmen today, carried Washington across to Murray's Wharf at the foot of Wall Street in New York, where an expectant crowd awaited. Most of the little city, reduced to twenty-five thousand by the withdrawal of War Loyalists, was in the milling crowd.

"The display of boats, which joined us on this occasion, some with vocal and some with instrumental music on board, the decorations of the ships, the roar of cannon, and the loud praises of the people as I passed along the wharves, filled my mind with sensations as painful as they are pleasing," Washington recorded in his diary.

Officials of state and military met him at the wharf stairs. Between gay lines of celebrants and decorated buildings, Governor Clinton and General Knox es-

<sup>1</sup> Letter of thanks from Washington to the Trenton mothers, Sawyer, Joseph Dillaway, *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184; *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, pp. 76-77.

corted Washington through the jam of traffic to his new home on Cherry Street,<sup>1</sup> facing Franklin Square. The whole scene was a glowing tribute.

Washington's inauguration was delayed one week. Strangely enough, Congress must decide on the rules of etiquette to be followed. The subject required study. For days the discussion centered around the manners of "good breeding" and "proper deportment." The Senate desired ceremonial dignity. The House objected to so much display. How was the President to be addressed? Should he be received standing or sitting? Meantime, April 30, the day of the inauguration, arrived without all the details of "reserved behavior" being settled.<sup>2</sup> The proper decorum to follow was still under consideration when the messenger announced the arrival of the President.

Troops escorted Washington from his residence to Federal Hall, a building turned over by the city to the government as a Capitol. Its chambers were rich in draperies, stately arches and marble vestibules. Four white horses drew his gilded carriage but a short distance. A traffic blockade checked his progress and delayed the ceremonies nearly an hour. It was a great day for the people; the Spring weather was balmy; there were flags and banners over every building. A festive spirit ruled the hour. During the last stage of the journey Washington alighted and walked with his escorts. On arrival, John Adams accompanied the President to his chair. Washington was dressed in a deep brown suit of American manufacture, knee

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol III, pp. 76-77.

<sup>2</sup> Bassett, J. S., *The Federalist System* (American Statesmen Series), p. 9; Maclay, William, *Ibid*, pp. 14-15; Bowers, Claude G., *Jefferson and Hamilton*, p. 5.



breeches, white stockings and buckled shoes.<sup>1</sup> He wore a dress sword. His personal appearance was impeccable.

The hour of 12:30 had arrived. From the Senate Chamber the officials now moved to the second story balcony, where the Constitutional oath was administered by Robert R. Livingston, Chancellor of the State of New York. Hurriedly a Bible was borrowed from the local Masonic Lodge for the ceremonies. As Washington gave his consent to the oath, the book resting on a red velvet cushion was held before him. When he bent to kiss the open volume,<sup>2</sup> Judge Livingston turned down the leaf. As the President raised his head, a great shout went up among the people.

"Long live George Washington, President of the United States," reverberated along the crowded streets.

Down on the Battery the cannon boomed thirteen times in salute to the States. The first President of the United States had been inducted into office.

Again within the Senate Chamber, nervous and excited, Washington delivered a brief inaugural address. His voice trembled; the paper in his hand shook; his gestures were awkward;<sup>3</sup> only a few caught his remarks.

In concluding, he said:

"Having thus imparted to you my sentiments, as they have been awakened by the occasion which brings us together, I shall take my present leave; but not with-

<sup>1</sup> So far as can be determined, James Madison, fourth President of the United States, was the first President who habitually wore long trousers. Washington, John Adams, and Jefferson wore knee breeches during their administrations.

<sup>2</sup> Still in possession of St. John's Masonic Lodge, New York. President Harding took his oath March 4, 1921, on the same Bible. Guards accompany the Bible when taken from the lodge rooms.

<sup>3</sup> Maclay, William, *Ibid*, p. 16.



IN THE TALL SHADOWS OF WALL STREET



out resorting once more to the benign Parent of the human race, in humble supplication, that, since he has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquillity, and dispositions for deciding with unparalleled unanimity on a form of government for the security of their union and the advancement of their happiness; so his divine blessing may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures, on which the success of this government must depend.”<sup>1</sup>

The ceremony over, Washington and the members of both houses retired to nearby St. Paul’s Church, where prayers were read. Today a tablet marks the seat in which the President sat. The storm and stress of the inaugural left him excited. He could not get his rest that night. Arising sleepless, he wrote in his diary:

“I greatly fear that my countrymen will expect too much of me.”

Carved in bronze by the sculptor, John Quincy Adams Ward, is a statue of Washington standing in the tall shadows of Wall Street on the spot where he took his oath of office. Narrow, crooked, deep canyon thoroughfares obstruct its view except for a short distance. The Subtreasury of the United States occupies the ground of the first Capitol.

Within the entrance, protected by glass, is a brownstone slab on which is inscribed:

STANDING ON THIS STONE  
IN THE BALCONY OF FEDERAL HALL  
APRIL 30, 1789,  
GEORGE WASHINGTON TOOK THE OATH  
AS FIRST PRESIDENT OF  
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

<sup>1</sup> Inaugural address of April 30, 1789, reprinted in full, *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, pp 465-466.

"There is a frown on Washington's face as if he does not approve the doings of the great financial center," remarked my companion.

The statement caught my fancy. I came closer to the figure. It was worth the moments of study I gave it. Washington's brow is knitted in pensive seriousness. A flash of grave determination floods his countenance. There is firmness in that jaw. Passion and flattery could not move a man of that make-up. Nature intended George Washington to be an Executive.

If the thousands who daily pass that way see in that bronze face what I saw inured in his stern features, they take back to their homes a picture of a determined man, resolved that a Republic shall be clean and respected.

No sooner was the inauguration of the President over than Congress went back to its study of etiquette. Again the question of title arose. Members were accustomed to the sonorous descriptions of office prefixed to the names of the kings and queens of England. Canopied thrones and niches for royalty beclouded the vision of those who favored democratic simplicity. Senators in bewilderment groped for a new way. It was understood that Washington's friends would like to have him called "His High Mightiness, the President of the United States, and the Protector of their Liberties."<sup>1</sup>

"By the Almighty! I will never address him that way," one Senator exclaimed.

Through common usage the title of "Mr. President"

<sup>1</sup> Hart, Albert Bushnell, *Formation of the Union*, p. 143; McMaster, John B., *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 542.

was soon after adopted. His wife was called "Lady Washington."

A tablet on the New York end of Brooklyn Bridge marks the site of the three-story, red-brick home occupied by the first President.<sup>1</sup> While Congress debated its problems of political etiquette, President and Mrs. Washington settled their social plans.

By gradual stages the new government was organized and began to function. The salary of the President was fixed at twenty-five thousand dollars a year, but Washington probably expended more than this amount.

"I walk upon untrodden ground," he observed. "There is scarcely any part of my conduct which cannot hereafter be drawn into precedent."

It was announced that the President would pay no visits; that he would receive on every other Tuesday afternoon; that on Thursdays he would be host at dinner for a selected list of officials and strangers of renown; and that Mrs. Washington would receive at levees every Friday evening from eight to ten.

"Nothing is regarded or valued at such meetings but the qualifications that flow from the tailor, barber, or dancing-master," recorded Senator Maclay, who, upon attending these levees, felt that an effort was being made to imitate the courts of Europe. "To be clean shaved, shirted, and powdered, to make your bows with grace, and to be master of small chat on the weather, play, or newspaper anecdote of the day, are the highest qualifications necessary. Levees may be extremely useful in old countries where men of great fortune are

<sup>1</sup> *Homes of George Washington*, pamphlet issued by George Washington Bicentennial Commission, p. 25

collected, as they may keep the idle from being much worse employed. But here I think they are hurtful. They interfere with the business of the public, and, instead of employing only the idle, have a tendency to make men idle who should be better employed. Indeed, from these small beginnings I fear we shall follow on nor cease till we have reached the summit of court etiquette, and all the frivolities, fopperies, and expense practiced in European governments. I grieve to think that many individuals among us are aiming at these objects with unceasing diligence."

At the Presidential receptions, Washington met his guests without a handshake; at his dinners "scarce a word was said until the cloth was taken away."

Strict punctuality marked the official dinners given by the Washingtons. Five minutes delay was permitted guests for a possible difference in watches. Then the dinner was served without further waiting.

"We are too punctual for you," the President would usually greet late arrivals with a touch of reproach in his tones. "I have a cook who never asks whether the company has come, but whether the hour has come."

After a few such rebukes there were no straggling guests for dinners at the Executive Mansion.

Samuel Fraunce, the famous New York chef and tavern-keeper, was selected as chief steward of the Presidential household. He functioned as if he were a high chamberlain of royalty. Varieties of wild game and either roast beef, veal, lamb, turkey, or duck were served at the dinners. Sometimes his lavish and expensive dinners riled Washington's sense of economy, who protested the waste of money from buying foods

out of season.<sup>1</sup> After the meal the President would raise a wine glass and drink a toast to his guests.<sup>2</sup> Then the ladies would retire. The men would sit around. Cigars and cigarettes were unknown in Washington's time and there is no record that he smoked.<sup>3</sup> Conversation was the only amusement after formal dinners. Politics was the cardinal topic.

Neither the President nor Mrs. Washington enjoyed all this life of fuss and claptrap. They endured and sanctioned it because they believed they must conform.

"I lead a very dull life here and know nothing that passes in town," Mrs. Washington opined. "I never go to any public place—indeed, I think I am more like a state prisoner than any thing else, there are certain bounds set for me which I must not depart from—and as I cannot do as I like, I am obstinate and stay at home a good deal."<sup>4</sup>

Riding in a brilliantly colored coach, decorated with cupids and drawn by four horses, Washington went for a weekly ride with Mrs. Washington. Six horses were used to draw the coach to the Federal Hall. This royal touch attracted the social climbers who crowded the levees. When the Executive Mansion became too small, the President moved to the Macomb House, the finest and largest residence in the city, on Broadway, near Trinity Church.

Hardships of life began to tell on Washington more than did his age. During the Summer of 1789 he suffered from anthrax of the thigh. It was the most se-

<sup>1</sup> Bowers, Claude G., *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 280; Andrews, Marietta Minnigerode, *George Washington's Country*, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 665.

<sup>4</sup> Woodward, W. E., *George Washington*, p. 436.



rious illness of his life. At times the pain was excruciating. He submitted to an operation. There were no anesthetics in those days. He bore the ordeal uncomplainingly. Recovery was despaired of by the President.

"Do not flatter me with vain hopes," he told Dr. Samuel Bard, his physician. "I am not afraid to die, and therefore can bear the worst."

"There are many things in your favor," the doctor encouragingly rejoined.<sup>1</sup>

"Whether tonight or twenty years hence makes no difference," continued the patient. "I know I am in the hands of a good Providence."

Rest mended his condition. About this time, however, and until the end of life, his teeth troubled him. The false plates made for him were awkward. One set was held in position by an irritating spring. Most of them gave him a fullness of mouth that distorted his features.<sup>2</sup> Little comfort was obtained.

With the social questions settled and his health improved, Washington plunged into the work of the departments. He read the reports of each branch made during the life of the Continental Congress. All his life, figures had fascinated him. Business captivated his fancies. It was not long before he had a firm grasp of the financial affairs of the Nation.

Washington looked to young men to assist in leadership. James Madison, sedate and profound, upon whom he depended to guide affairs in Congress, was thirty-two; Jefferson, red-headed and resourceful, the Secretary of State, was forty-six; and Hamilton, keen

<sup>1</sup> Thayer, William Roscoe, *Ibid*, p. 185; Irving, Washington, *Ibid*, Vol. V, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. III, p. 270.

and determined, who held the difficult Treasury post, was only thirty-two. The other members of his Cabinet, Henry Knox, Secretary of War, and Edmund Randolph, Attorney General, were scholarly men of high attainments and long public training. John Jay, appointed the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, was forty-four.

Early in the conferences with the President, a division arose in the Cabinet. Hamilton advocated the assumption of the war debts of the States amounting to approximately twenty-one million dollars, together with a payment of the National debt due to the war, a total of seventy-five million dollars. Business stability demanded it, he argued.

At first Jefferson entertained a different view. A Presidential dinner intervened. The two talked things over. They left their host arm in arm down the street. A bargain was struck—of which Jefferson was afterwards ashamed. It was agreed that New York should be abandoned as the Capital and that for the following ten years the Government be located at Philadelphia. After 1800 it was to be moved to the proposed Federal City, an area of land ten miles square on the banks of the Potomac. The South wanted the Capital. It was satisfied with the deal.

New York and the financial interests wanted money. Their demands were appeased when Jefferson withdrew his objections to the Hamilton Assumptions Measure. It passed July 24, 1790. There was no debt repudiation.

Business had won its first great political compromise in National affairs. Speculators holding upwards of forty million dollars of the unredeemed certificates of

the State and Nation became suddenly rich. The taxpayers paid the bill. American credit was established.<sup>1</sup> Hamilton became the most powerful member of the Cabinet.

"I do not see that I can do any good here, and I think I had better go home," wrote Maclay, one of the extremists. "Everything, even the naming of committees, is prearranged by Hamilton and his group of speculators."

Now the seat of government moved back to Philadelphia. Washington followed from New York on August 30, 1790. He welcomed the change. For the next seven years the towering, red-brick Independence Hall, associated with so many memories of his high endeavors, was to inspire his daily service.

<sup>1</sup> Bowers, Claude G., *Ibid*, pp. 65-67; Caemmerer, H. P., *Washington, The National Capital*, Senate Document No. 332, 71st Congress, 3d Session, p. 9; Bassett, J. S., *The Federalist System (The American Nation, a History)*, p. 36; Beard, Charles A., in preface to *The Journal of William Maclay*, p. vii.

## CHAPTER XX

### A SWING AROUND THE CIRCLE

#### NORTH AND SOUTH

GEORGE WASHINGTON was a disciple of the doctrine "See-America-First." While President of the United States he made friendship tours to farms, factories, and firesides in both the North and the South. He passed under the dark green shades of the pine trees of Maine. He viewed the radiant colorings of evening as the soft light suffused the palmetto groves of the Carolinas. Everywhere he met people; learned their temper toward the new government.

More than any man of his time, Washington knew the United States. As an Indian fighter in young manhood he held the record for long distance horseback journeys. When, as the Executive of the Nation, he journeyed from the Capital, the coming of his coach of white and gold with outriders became an oft-repeated story in the countryside. The Civil War erases these legendary tales from the memory.

Led onward by the mellowed sunshine of a New England October, on hillsides and ravines, I followed Washington on his Presidential tour to Boston.<sup>1</sup> The cotton factories that excited his wonder have since expanded and grown to commercial importance. The

<sup>1</sup> Map, *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, Plate 26, p. 406.

Connecticut Valley of the twisting roads, the golden tones above the wooded slopes, and the silver streams deep down in cool shaded retreats give spirituality to the rugged landscape traveled. The beauty of the Valley awed me at every turn, but it appears to have made no impression worth recording in Washington's diary. Instead, his memoranda of the journey are a pioneer edition of Baedeker, crowded with facts about cows, hogs, lands, churches, growing cities,—the beginnings of industries.<sup>1</sup>

Whether Washington traveled North or South, these good will tours did much to cement the States into a National unit. His successors have followed his example.

Six months after his inauguration, at his suggestion, and with the approval of the Cabinet, Washington began the first Presidential "swing around the circle."<sup>2</sup> The purpose was to acquaint the people with the Central Government and win their support.

The tour had been methodically planned. Leaving New York on October 15, 1789, Washington traveled northward as far as Kittery, Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, where he fished for cod. All New England States were visited except Rhode Island—then a foreign country.

As in a pageant of Royalty, Washington rode in a "hired" coach, accompanied by Major William Jackson, his aide-de-camp, and Tobias Lear, his private secretary. Six servants went along.<sup>3</sup> Besides the glittering coach, nine horses and a luggage wagon made up the retinue.

<sup>1</sup> *Diary of George Washington, 1789-1791*, Edited by Benson J. Lossing.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, Henry Jones, *Washington and his Colleagues*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 127.

Following the New York-Boston post road he found many things worth recording. The first day he wrote in his diary:

"The Road for the greater part, indeed the whole way, was very rough and stoney, but the Land strong, well covered with grass and luxuriant crop of Indian Corn intermixed with Pompions (pumpkins) (which were yet ungathered) in the fields. We met four droves of Beef Cattle for the New York Market (about 30 in a drove), some of which were very fine—also a flock of Sheep for the same place. We scarcely passed a farm that did not abd. in Geese."

Washington was interested in the dam at Stamford; visited Yale, a college of one hundred twenty students; from the mills of Hartford he ordered for himself a suit of woolen. At times he was escorted by Revolutionary veterans. He made stops at<sup>1</sup> Wallingford, Middletown, Wethersfield, Hartford, Springfield, Palmer, Brookfield, Leicester, and Worcester.

"Light your bonfires, the white chariot is coming over the hill," seemed the signal for welcoming the President along the way.<sup>2</sup>

Everyone left his tasks with the President's approach. Farmers gathered with their wives to see the chariot of white and gold, with silk curtains at the windows, pass. Washington's polished coat of arms gleamed from the door panels. Bells rang, cannon roared the National salute on his approach to the cities. At night the sky flashed with rockets and fireworks. At first the people seemed a little awed, as if in the presence of royalty. Some addressed him as "His Majesty." Others stood aloof until he approached them.

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 288.

Never before did he talk with so much freedom to the people. He was determined to divert their attention to the arts of peace and to the policies of the Federal Government.

Before Washington reached Boston his official dignity was put to a supreme test. Egotistical, domineering John Hancock, Governor of Massachusetts, shamming illness, craftily attempted to augment the power of the State over the Federal Government by inviting the President to make the first call. Both were old friends. Somehow Washington sensed a ruse.

"I do not feel myself at liberty to waive the respect due to the office of President," General Washington, instantly and with grave frankness, told the two messengers sent to inform him of their Governor's illness.

Realizing that a breach of etiquette had been committed, Hancock dispatched a hurried note in which he declared that he would hazard his health for the opportunity immediately of meeting Washington.

Washington's reply was cryptic:

"25 October, one o'clock.

"The President of the United States presents his best respects to the Governor, and has the honor to inform him that he shall be at home till two o'clock.

"The President need not express the pleasure it will give him to see the Governor; but at the same time, he most earnestly begs that the Governor will not hazard his health on the occasion."

Coming in a gorgeous coach, Hancock arrived at Washington's inconspicuous lodging place an hour later. With his gouty feet swathed in red flannels he was carried into Washington's presence. Hancock's

visit was so gracious and apologetic that the President in half-comedy wrote in his diary:

“Sunday, 25th.

“ . . . I received a visit from the Gov'r., who assured me that indisposition alone prevented his doing it yesterday, and that he was still indisposed; but as it had been suggested that he expected to receive the first visit from the President, which he knew was improper, he was resolved at all haz'ds to pay his Compliments today.”

Advocates of state rights had been taught a social lesson.

Once more Washington strolled over the green of Harvard College, where he trained the first troops of the Revolution; attended a dinner in Faneuil Hall, but was forced to forego the pleasure of a visit to Lexington.

At Beverly he inspected with great interest New England's first cotton mill, owned by the Cabots. At other cities he saw the promising manufacture of duck, linen and woollens. In the industrial embryo of the Nation he saw a future commercial independence.

New Hampshire officials attempted to outdo Massachusetts with the enthusiasm of the welcome. Veterans of the War, troops of horses in brilliant uniforms, and state officials escorted him as far as Kittery, where all went fishing.

“It not being the proper time of tide, we only caught two,” Washington lamented.

This was the end of his journey. He now turned homeward. Out of respect to the Connecticut Sunday law he rested.



"I attended morning and evening service and heard very lame discourses," he recorded.

On November 13 he was back in New York.

All was harmony in the Union except for Rhode Island. Continued haughtiness by that state resulted in a threat from Congress to cut off her trade privileges. This was sufficient. On May 19, 1790, Rhode Island rejoined "the old thirteen" by ratifying the Constitution. Three months later Washington visited the State, arriving by sea<sup>1</sup>—his only ocean voyage except the Barbados trip made with his brother during youth.

So successful were his tours of the Northern States that he felt obligated to continue his journeys during the Spring of 1791 into the states South of Virginia. He left Mount Vernon on April 7 and returned on June 12. It was the longest land trip of his career. The whole distance of 1,887 miles was made by coach, using his own horses and keeping up with his schedule as published before leaving Philadelphia.

On the way he tramped over the acres of his boyhood home near Fredericksburg; inspected the James River Canal at Richmond; was received with enthusiasm all along the way through New Bern, Wilmington, Charleston, and Savannah. He returned inland through Columbia, Charlotte, Salem, and Hillsboro. It was a long and exciting vacation.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the taverns and places in the Southland visited by Washington on his Presidential tour stand as landmarks today. At New Bern is the Stanley House

<sup>1</sup> Map, *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, Plate 26, p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Map of Southern Tour, *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 414, Plate 34; Bassett, J. S., *The Federalist System (The American Nation, a History)*, p. 25.



ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS OAK TREES OF AMERICA



STANLEY HOUSE AT NEW BERN



where he was entertained; near Wilmington is the "Washington Oak" under which he rested before entering the city; in Savannah are the headquarters used during his stay.

Only once did he break his custom of declining to be entertained at private homes. Between Charleston and Savannah he stopped all night at "Sandy Hill," the home of his cousin, William Washington.<sup>1</sup>

At almost every city soldiers of the Revolution came to meet again their old commander. Their reunions were sometimes pathetic. Wherever possible the Revolutionary battlefields of the South were inspected.

Examining the journals of the trip, I found that a singular observation re-occurs<sup>2</sup> so often in the diary as to attract attention. He meticulously records the number of ladies present at nearly all the social functions in his honor. His comments on their handsome gowns, their fascinating appearance make one believe their charms were not wasted.

Washington considered his trip a complete success.

"I am much pleased that I have taken this journey," wrote Washington upon his return to Philadelphia, "as it has enabled me to see with my own eyes the situation of the country through which we travelled, and to learn more accurately the disposition of the people than I could have done by any information.

"The country appears to be in a very improving state, and industry and frugality are becoming much more fashionable than they have hitherto been there. Tranquillity reigns among the people, with that dispo-

<sup>1</sup> *Historical Commission, City of Charleston, S. C.*, reports old house, probably burned when Sherman marched his army from Savannah through South Carolina, has been restored by the present owner

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol III, p 84.

sition towards the general government, which is likely to preserve it. They begin to feel the good effects of equal laws and equal protection. . . . Each day's experience of the government of the United States seems to confirm its establishment, and to render it more popular."

Another election was only a year away. Despite party differences and ill feeling between members of the Cabinet, not a voice was raised in opposition to Washington. When the electoral votes were counted on December 5, 1792, President Washington was found declared unanimously elected—an honor never again to be repeated by the States.

From October 15 to November 13, 1789, President Washington made a tour of the New England States, except Rhode Island. Leaving New York on October 15, he passed through the following cities: Stamford, Norwalk, Fairfield, Stratford, Milford, West Haven, North Haven, Durham, Wethersfield, Hartford, Windsor, Suffield, Springfield, Palmer, Brookfield, Spencer, Leicester, Worcester, Shrewsbury, Marlborough, Sudbury, Weston, Cambridge, Boston, Charlestown, Lynn, Salem, Beverly, Ipswich, Newburyport, Salisbury, Kittery.

On his return journey he passed through Portsmouth, Exeter, Kingstown, Haverhill, Bradford, Andover, Bellariki, Lexington, Cambridge, Needham, Sherburn, Holliston, Milford, Menden, Usbridge, Douglas, Thompson, Pomfret, Ashford, Mansfield, Coventry, East Hartford, Wethersfield, Worthington (Berlin), Wallingford, New Haven, Stratford, Fairfield, Norwalk, Stamford, and back to New York on November 13, 1789.

From April 7 to June 12, 1791, President Washington, starting from Mount Vernon, made a tour of the Southern States. He passed through the following cities: Fredericksburg, Richmond, Petersburg, Halifax (April 16-17), Tarborough, Greenville, New Bern, Trenton, Wilmington, Georgetown, Charleston, Savannah (May 13-15), Waynesborough, Augusta (May 17-20), Columbia, Camden, Charlotte, Salisbury, Salem, Guilford (June 2-3), Halifax Old Town, Prince Edward Court House, Carter's Ferry, Fredericksburg, and back to Mount Vernon on June 12, 1791.

## CHAPTER XXI

### WITHIN SOUND OF THE LIBERTY BELL

#### OLD CAPITOL, PHILADELPHIA

WITHIN Independence Square at Philadelphia gleams a rambling group of historic red-brick buildings more intimately and longer associated with George Washington than any others aside from Mount Vernon. Adjoining Independence Hall is a structure of Georgian architecture used by Congress as the Capitol during the decade from 1790 to 1800 before moving to the destined seat of government on the Potomac.

For nearly a quarter of a century the activities of Washington rotated about this scene of central authority. The buildings reflect his eventful achievements in establishing the Nation. So bright is the imperishable light which history floods upon this shrine that one treads its silent halls with lightness and veneration. It is a sacred retreat for American glory.

Here Washington came to represent Virginia as a member of the Continental Congress; here he accepted his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the armies; here the Declaration of Independence was drafted and signed; here the Articles of Confederation as a form of national government were approved; here the Constitution was framed under Washington's eye; here he came to Congress Hall on March 4, 1793, to renew his oath for a second term as President of the

United States; and here from the lofty tower tolled the Liberty Bell after word had come that George Washington had joined the immortals.

I spent some time in these buildings. Each hour found fresh reasons for delay. Their reminiscent rooms are dedicated to the great patriots who labored within its purlieus. Above the Declaration Chamber, approached through communicating arched recesses and up a winding stairs, is a room lined with portraits of the Signers, and some other worthies—among them Washington. Sunlight, shut out by tall buildings and city dust, struggles dimly through the windows.

Nearby stands another landmark. It is the old Capitol of the United States. Up those long stairs went George Washington to his second inaugural. The House of Representatives where he took the oath has been kept intact. Today the scene has been re-created. The appropriate simplicity in the arrangement of the room, the ceiling and walls in severe white, faithfully rekindle the atmosphere of that hour of long ago. Within an enclosure sat the Congress and dignitaries who witnessed the solemn event.

Around that old Capitol cluster the memories of the most trying years of Washington's Presidency. Foreign wars threatened; domestic disturbances arose; members of the Cabinet quarreled. Here Washington met those problems with supreme courage. Today his fame and that of his colleagues of those troubled days seem to be whispered on every wind that plays about the colonnades of the liberty tower <sup>1</sup> and the doorway of the deserted Capitol.

<sup>1</sup> The Liberty Bell was cracked July 8, 1835, while tolling for the death of Chief Justice John Marshall. It was taken down in 1843 and now reposes under an arch near the entrance to Independence Hall. At night a bower of concealed lamps floods it with light.



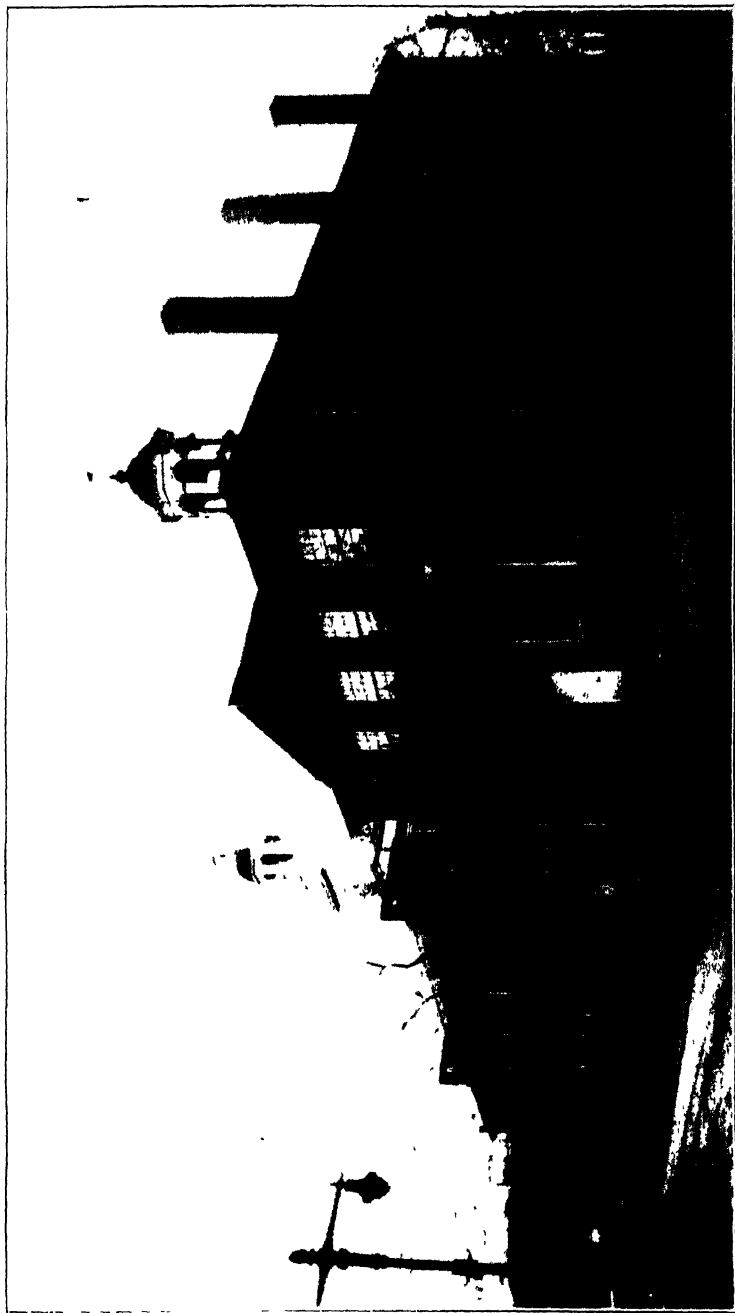
On the threshold of Washington's second term, a foreign problem arose which quickly divided the Nation. France overthrew its Monarchy, executed the King, and founded a Republic. A kindred wave of enthusiasm swept America. There was no brooking it. The country reeled headlong into a pitch of frenzy. People sang French songs, wore French tri-colored cockades, and began to call each other by the French titles of "citizen" and "citess."<sup>1</sup> War between France and England was declared early in April, 1793. The enthusiasm of the hour threatened to involve and drag America along.

Alarmed at the seriousness of the situation, Jefferson and Hamilton summoned Washington from Mount Vernon, where he had gone to rest. The President hastily returned. A Cabinet meeting was called. "Citizen" Edmond Charles Genêt, the minister of the newly established French republic, had already landed at Charleston. On his arrival the population went into ecstasies. Without consulting the government at Philadelphia, Genêt proceeded to commission privateers, which began to raid the coastwise English shipping, using the United States as his base. Daily the people became more hysterical as Genêt advanced northward to present his credentials to the government.

Never for a moment did Washington yield in his determination not to be involved in the quarrel between France and England. Conscious of his friendship for LaFayette and acknowledging our debt to France for support during the Revolution, he nevertheless saw that the hope of America lay in strict neutrality.<sup>2</sup> A

<sup>1</sup> Bassett, J. S., *Ibid*, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 292.



THE CAPITOL (FROM 1790-1800) WITH LIBERTY HALL IN THE BACKGROUND



proclamation was issued on April 22 which established the American foreign doctrine of avoiding complications with European affairs. The announcement only added oil to flame. The tether of Washington's personal magnetism slipped. He was denounced as a monarchist. He was cartooned in regal robes and as wearing a crown. The French clamor rose to new heights.

"You could appreciate the value of the declarations of neutrality which have been made," gleefully wrote Genêt to his superior in France, "if you knew the enthusiasm and the entire devotion of our friends in the United States."<sup>1</sup>

With cold dignity, Genêt was received on May 18 with a bow instead of the fraternal kiss symbolic of the Revolution. Washington disappointed him. "The old man," as he reported the interview, impeded his movements and was sullen over public approval of French policies. It became a test of popularity. Genêt would override the views of Washington. He appealed to the people. He went forth to build up a critical public sentiment.

The inevitable crisis arose. Genêt refused to release a British ship captured in American waters. Washington became furious.

"Is the minister of the French Republic to set the acts of this government at defiance with impunity, and then threaten the Executive with an appeal to the people?" Washington demanded of his advisors.<sup>2</sup>

He called a Cabinet meeting on August 1, to officially request the recall of Genêt. On August 23 the

<sup>1</sup> *Report American Historical Association*, 1903, p. 215; Fish, Carl Russell, *American Diplomacy*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, Worthington C., *Washington's Writings*, Vol. XII, p. 302; *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol I, p. 87

letter was sent. Soon the ardor of the misguided people began to cool. France acceded. Genêt's mission ended in February, 1794. Fearing for his own head if he returned to France, he married a daughter of Governor Clinton of New York and settled down as an American citizen.<sup>1</sup>

Washington's policy to keep out of the affairs of Europe had survived its first test.

Troubles multiplied during the fall of 1793. An epidemic of yellow fever broke out in Philadelphia, the Capital city, taking a toll of four thousand people—one out of seven in the population. The scourge became so infectious that whole families were wiped out. A strange morbidity spread. Women and men smoked constantly as a preventive; they ate garlic and carried it in their pockets to ward off the disease. The sick were shunned; the dead went to their graves unattended. People refused to shake hands with each other. Washington moved his residence to Germantown to escape the malady. He sent personal funds to Bishop White for distribution among the poor and to care for the suffering.<sup>2</sup> With cool weather, the disease abated. As winter approached, Washington returned to Philadelphia. The social levees were resumed.

Through the tenseness of the Genêt episode, which reached its pitch in the early fall of 1793, a rift in the Cabinet arose between Jefferson and Hamilton. Hamilton believed in a strong Central Government in which wealth was recognized. Jefferson believed in a democracy and in greater power among the States. The two

<sup>1</sup> Ford, Henry Jones, *Washington and his Colleagues*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Carey, Mathew, *The Yellow Fever Epidemic in Philadelphia* (Great Epochs in American History, Edited by Francis W. Halsey), Vol. IV, p. 83; Bowers, Claude G., pp. 237-239; Sawyer, Joseph Dillaway, *Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 245.

could not agree. Temperamentally they were different. Washington tried to reconcile them. He wanted peace in his official family.

"Mankind can not think alike," he wrote Jefferson, "but would adopt different means to secure the same end. . . . Why, then, should either of you be so tenacious in your own opinions as to make no allowance for those of the other? . . . I have a great, sincere esteem and regard for you both; and ardently wish that some line could be marked out by which both of you could walk."

Newspapers took up the Cabinet quarrel. Jefferson secretly organized Congress against Hamilton. Soon the people took sides. Hamilton and Jefferson were opposite political magnets. The first party leaders began to strut. The followers of Hamilton became Federalists. Their opponents, the disciples of Jefferson, took the name of "Republicans."

"I thought the Republicans came in as a political organization just before the Civil War?" I asked the attendant at Congress Hall, who volunteered to explain the party beginnings.

"Jefferson started the first opposition party," he responded. "It was against those who were in office. It took the name 'Republican' because it was created to resist the rise of monarchy. Washington was not for monarchy but because he leaned toward Hamilton's policies Jefferson left that implication. It was not until later that the opposition assumed the name 'Democrats.'"

Washington watched the Cabinet breach widen with apprehension. He saw no need of parties. They would stir up hatred. He refused to affiliate with either fac-

tion. He was a Federalist without admitting it. During the last two years of his administration his policies were distinctly Hamiltonian. When Jefferson saw that the President's inclinations were with the treasury secretary, he insisted that his resignation, for months in the hands of the President, be accepted. Washington finally consented.

On December 31, 1793, Jefferson left the Cabinet and became the leader in opposition to the administration. From his beloved home, Monticello,<sup>1</sup> he wrote letters, counseled and fostered the first party movement. The shadow line of separation among the masses, which he drew, still persists—aristocracy against democracy.

One event of the fall, however, gave happiness to the harassed President. When, on July 16, 1790, Congress passed the measure locating the future National Capital on the banks of the Potomac, commissioners were quickly named by the President to make the surveys. Almost at the same time Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant was selected to prepare a plan of the Federal City. After the ten-mile tract had been laid out, it was decided to erect the government buildings within the area on the Maryland side. Washington gave personal attention to the undertaking and on his Southern tour in the Spring of 1791 approved the general planning.<sup>2</sup> Later when L'Enfant was dismissed by the commissioners Washington redoubled his interest. On September 18, 1793, participating in the Masonic ceremonies, he laid the cornerstone of the Capitol. Streets were es-

<sup>1</sup> Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, is near Charlottesville, Virginia. It is open to the public. Close by was neighbor James Monroe, whose residence, Ash Lawn, is also a public memorial. The old home of James Madison, near Orange, Virginia, is privately owned.

<sup>2</sup> Caemmerer, *Washington, The National Capital*, p. 23.

tablished; buildings went up. Within ten years three thousand people were making the district their home.

Washington modestly referred to the new undertaking as "The Federal City." The building commissioners and the public called it "Washington." Today the dreams of the first President and the city planner are a gleaming triumph wrought in granite and marble. Destiny has revealed it to be the most beautiful Capital City in the world. It is George Washington's most enduring memorial.

Gradually a discontent mounted in the West over the administration's tax policies. Ever since the enactment of the excise law of 1791 placing a tax on whiskey, opposition to its collection had arisen in Western Pennsylvania. In that section it was the people's only source of livelihood, and to them the tax seemed burdensome. Armed opposition arose over its attempted collection. Sympathetic mobs intimidated the tax inspectors. Mass meetings denounced the law. Disguised bands of ruffians, known as "Whiskey Boys," visited those who obeyed the statutes, injuring the owners, and destroying their property. Liberty poles bristled from every hill, flying the motto: "Liberty and No Excise."

Alarmed at the spread of the rebellion, Washington took firm action. He issued a proclamation against the rioters on August 7, 1794, and called for fifteen thousand militia from the States of Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey to be ready to march on September 1. He journeyed to Bedford, Pennsylvania, where, on October 23, he reviewed the forces and ordered the advance over the mountains. With the show of authority the rebels dispersed. No resistance was offered. The soldiers marched through their towns un-



impeded. A few of the leaders were arrested but later pardoned. The "Whiskey Rebellion" terminated without bloodshed.<sup>1</sup> A year later, on July 10, 1795, Washington issued a proclamation of amnesty for the western insurgents. The first domestic conflict ended with greater respect for the Central Government.

One more test of the vigor of Washington's foreign policy was made. This time England played the role of aggressor. Even while Genêt was attempting to lash the country to join France in a war against England, the British were brazenly violating the laws that protected neutral commerce. Ships were seized; American seamen were impressed; there was no redress. Moreover, England flatly refused to withdraw her troops from the outposts in the West. As the news of the ruction spread, people gathered anticipating an early announcement of war. There was great uneasiness. The nerves of the Republic were unsteady.

Washington asked John Jay to relinquish his post as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to accept a diplomatic position as special minister to negotiate a settlement and treaty with England.

"If he succeed, well; if he does not, why, knowing the worst we must take measures accordingly," Washington wrote from Mount Vernon. "My primary objects . . . have been to preserve the country in peace, if I can, and to be prepared for war if I cannot."<sup>2</sup>

Jay arrived in England early in June, 1794, but found the attitude of the English ministers cold. After months

<sup>1</sup> McMaster, John B., *History of the People of the United States*, Vol. II, pp. 190-203.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, Worthington C., *Ibid*, Vol. XII, p. 436; Thayer, William Roscoe, *Ibid*, p. 207.

of negotiations it was agreed that the Western posts were to be evacuated but he could secure no guarantee for neutral trade or impressment of seamen. Dissatisfied with the contents of the treaty, Washington, nevertheless, submitted it to the Senate in an extra session called for June 8, 1794. If war was to be averted the treaty must be ratified. With the disclosure of its incredible terms to the Senate, the debate grew vehement. Days dragged in useless oratory. The climax was reached when the enfeebled Fisher Ames of Massachusetts arose. He pictured the horrors of war if the treaty failed. He even visioned the end of the Government itself.

"I have as little personal interest in the event as anyone," he declared, lifting his voice as if inspired. "There is, I believe, no member who will not think his chance to be a witness of the consequences greater than mine. If, however, the vote should pass to reject—even I, slender and almost broken as my hold on life is, may outlive the Government and Constitution of my country."<sup>1</sup>

On the day following, the treaty was ratified by a two-thirds vote. On August 18, 1795, Washington approved. For the next sixteen years peace with England was maintained. It remained for the War of 1812 satisfactorily to adjust the issues Jay was unable to settle.

With the publication of the treaty a ubiquitous public uproar became bitter and bellicose. Politicians made it an issue; the press fanned the fury. Jay was hung in effigy; Hamilton was stoned when he attempted to speak; Washington was denounced as a traitor; in derision the press called him "the stepfather of his coun-

<sup>1</sup> Thayer, William Roscoe, *Ibid*, p. 213.

try." He was publicly humiliated but his spirit was unbroken. He faced the storm-tossed sea of acrimony like a seasoned mariner. Only his personal popularity drove Congress to pass the appropriations for making the treaty effective. No longer was Washington the unanimous voice of the Nation.

Stung by the censure, but still brave, Washington wrote to Jefferson:

"Until within the last year or two, I had no conception that parties would or even could go the length I have been witness to; nor did I believe until lately that it was within the bounds of . . . possibility that, while I was using my utmost exertions to establish a national character of our own, independent . . . of every Nation of the earth, and wished, by steering a steady course, to preserve this country from the horrors of a desolating war, I should be accused of being the enemy of one Nation, and subject to the influence of another; and that my every act would be tortured, and the grossest misrepresentations of them made, in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pickpocket."

Weary and worn, Washington determined to retire. To forestall all "third term" talk he issued a Farewell Address<sup>1</sup> on September 17, 1796, in which he announced that he would not accept re-election. Hamilton and Madison had assisted him in framing the noted state paper. It stands as his greatest public utterance. He urged the Nation to "avoid the accumulation of debt," to "resist with care the spirit of innovation" upon the principles of established government; to promote

<sup>1</sup> Never read by the President in public, but given to the people through the medium of David Claypoole's "American Daily Advertiser," Philadelphia, in its issue of September 19, 1796.

institutions "for the general diffusion of knowledge."

One paragraph made history. It has guided the foreign policy of many of Washington's successors:

"Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence, she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

"Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. If we remain one people, under an efficient government, the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon, to be scrupulously respected; when belligerent nations, under the impossibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation, when we may choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel."<sup>1</sup>

The President turned prophet was ready to step down.

A simple function rang down the curtain. On the evening of March 3, 1797, the Morris House,<sup>2</sup> which for four years had been used as the President's Mansion, was brilliantly lighted with candles. The President-elect and Mrs. Adams were house guests. When all were seated, Washington arose at the head of the

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol I, p. 491; *Washington's Farewell Address*, Senate Document No. 410, Sixty-fifth Congress, Third Session.

<sup>2</sup> *Homes of George Washington*, George Washington Bicentennial Commission, p. 29. George Washington never occupied the White House at Washington. President and Mrs. John Adams moved in November, 1800, the year Washington became the seat of government.

table. In the yellow light, his hair appeared snowy white. He was sixty-five. He was old and disillusioned by fame.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he said, and then paused a moment, "this is the last time I shall drink your health as a public man; I do it with sincerity and wishing you all public happiness."

At noon the day following he accompanied the President-elect to the inaugural ceremonies. As Washington left Congress Hall, the multitude crowded close. He passed along, smiled, and bowed. His sallowed face was radiant with happiness and contentment.

"Washington seemed to enjoy a triumph over me," President Adams wrote his wife that night. "Methought I heard him say, 'Ay! I am fairly out and you fairly in! See which of us will be the happiest!'"<sup>1</sup>

Along the way homeward the Washington family visited many friends. There was no reason for hurrying along. It was March 15 when Mount Vernon was reached. Neighbors were gathered at the entrance.

Beside the open gate, where the carriage rolled in, bloomed the first offering of the season. On the tables of the mansion were freshly gathered flowers.

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Historic places in Philadelphia of interest to Washington include the Betsy Ross House where the first American flag is said to have been made in 1777; Carpenters Hall where the First Continental Congress met in 1774 of which Washington was a member; Christ Church where Washington, John Adams,

<sup>1</sup> Wilstach, Paul, *Mount Vernon*, p. 199. For table of General Washington's visits to Mount Vernon while President, see Appendix B, p. 283

Franklin, and other notables worshipped; Congress Hall, built in 1789, and occupied by the Federal Congress from 1790 to 1800; Independence Hall where Washington was chosen Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army, and where on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

## CHAPTER XXII

### REUNION WITH THE HOME FOLK

#### ALEXANDRIA

GEORGE WASHINGTON still lives incarnate among the home folk of Alexandria, Virginia. There are cobblestone alleys in this old town that still click-click and echo as they did when, either on horseback or in coach of four, he rode over them.<sup>1</sup> There are deeply encased, porchless doorways, with shiny brass knockers, over whose thresholds he often passed. There are the green-trimmed hedges whose privacy and seclusion he admired through the curtained windows of his hosts' comfortable rooms.

No community is more intimately associated with Washington than Alexandria. None has attempted to keep closer in touch with his spirit. Alexandria was Washington's home town—he found in it his market, his lodge, and his voting place. Lying midway between the National Capital and Mount Vernon, this city, once the rival of Boston for commercial supremacy, is now proud to grow and age with Washington's memories.

There is so much here of Washington—the place of worship he attended, old buildings where he visited, names of families in whose mellowed homes he once made merry with their ancestors. From Alexandria he

<sup>1</sup> These streets were built by the captured Hessian soldiers during the Revolutionary War.

went on his mission to warn the French out of the Ohio Valley in 1753; from there he went to the Presidency, and to its people he returned when the cares of office were ended.

Days of the Crown and of the Republic mingle in this old town on the Potomac. Some of the streets bear the names of Royalty—King, Prince, Duke, Queen, and Royal. Then there are thoroughfares for Washington, Jefferson, Madison, and Lee. Buildings wear the Colonial pattern.<sup>1</sup> The oldest and most venerable are the barnlike Ramsay house, built in 1748, and the Carlyle home, where General Braddock conferred with five Royal governors and Washington, before beginning his ill-fated campaign in 1754. Some nod or frown with sleepless age. Others there are which beam with an old world countenance, as if selected and moved in rows from the seafaring towns of England and Scotland.

If you would come to know George Washington as the former President in contented retirement, stroll leisurely today about the streets of Alexandria. Within a ten-block walk I found the homes he so often entered, the drug store where he traded, the bank where he did business and acted as a director; the hotel where he entertained, and the lodge he attended. I sat before firesides where he had sat; I looked out upon scenes, still unchanged, that he had witnessed. Here he was at ease in the comfort and companionship of fast friends.

Many of the descendants of these neighbors of Washington still live in the romantic houses, as dark in color as the clay hills of Virginia from which the brick walls were made. The buildings marshal in rows and crowd the sidewalk. Within are the same furniture and heir-

<sup>1</sup> Rothery, Agnes, *New Roads in Old Virginia*, pp. 4-9.



looms. The luster of seclusion and aristocracy is untarnished. The past seems very close in these old homes and narrow streets.

And where the past once bowed to modernity, it is coming back. Old homes are being renovated and rehabilitated. Wealthy women from the National Capital speak with pride of the fact that they have moved to Alexandria to inhabit a house once occupied by a Washington neighbor. There is an animated touch of social distinction in the innovation. One of these women, who lives with the past, took me house-hunting through Alexandria. Expeditions through a battlefield could compare with it for immediate interest.

"We shall first stop at Gadsby's Tavern," she announced at the outset. As we proceeded she told the story:

"This inn is probably more intimately associated with Washington than the Raleigh Tavern at Williamsburg, where he met with other pre-Revolutionary War patriots to devise protests against the taxation policies of the Crown. On the pages of its guest books are found the names of Washington, Braddock, Franklin, LaFayette, Jefferson, Baron DeKalb, and John Paul Jones.

"A few years ago the interior of the panelled ball-room where Washington danced and entertained was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, and there was reconstructed in the American wing. Since then the Alexandria American Legion Post has purchased Gadsby's and restored the notable inn."

She led me before the doorway where we paused to read:

POPULAR RESORT AND FAMOUS HOSTELRY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. HERE WAS HELD IN 1798 THE FIRST CELEBRATION OF WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, IN WHICH HE PARTICIPATED AND FROM ITS STEPS WASHINGTON HELD HIS LAST MILITARY REVIEW AND GAVE HIS LAST MILITARY ORDER, NOVEMBER 1799.<sup>1</sup>

"The birthday ball held here on February 11, 1799, was the last that General and Mrs. Washington attended,"<sup>2</sup> my companion commented sadly when I had turned away.

Hanging in a frame on the walls of the ordinary was an old newspaper from which I copied a description of the event:

"The evening was concluded by a ball and supper given at Mr. Gadsby's which was much superior to anything of the kind ever known here. The company was numerous and brilliant; and beauty of person and excellency of taste, in the ladies, seemed to vie for a preference. The house was elegantly illuminated; and the ball room was adorned with a transparent likeness of General Washington, executed in masterly style."

The tavern used to be Washington's resting place on the horseback journey from Mount Vernon to the Federal City. I poked my head through broken slats in the lattice that hid the hotel garden. In fancy the scene threw me back more than a century. The roistering chore boys and grooms have disappeared. The crack of the driver's whip is silenced. No foam-flecked horses nor mud-smeared coaches of those hectic stagecoach

<sup>1</sup> *Alexandria Gazette, Virginia Souvenir Number*, in Commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Birth of George Washington, Section C, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Washington always celebrated his birthday on February 11, according to the old calendar. The revised calendar, which went into vogue shortly after his death, changes his birthday to February 22.

days jam the yard entrance. The golden age of Colonial transportation has gone forever.

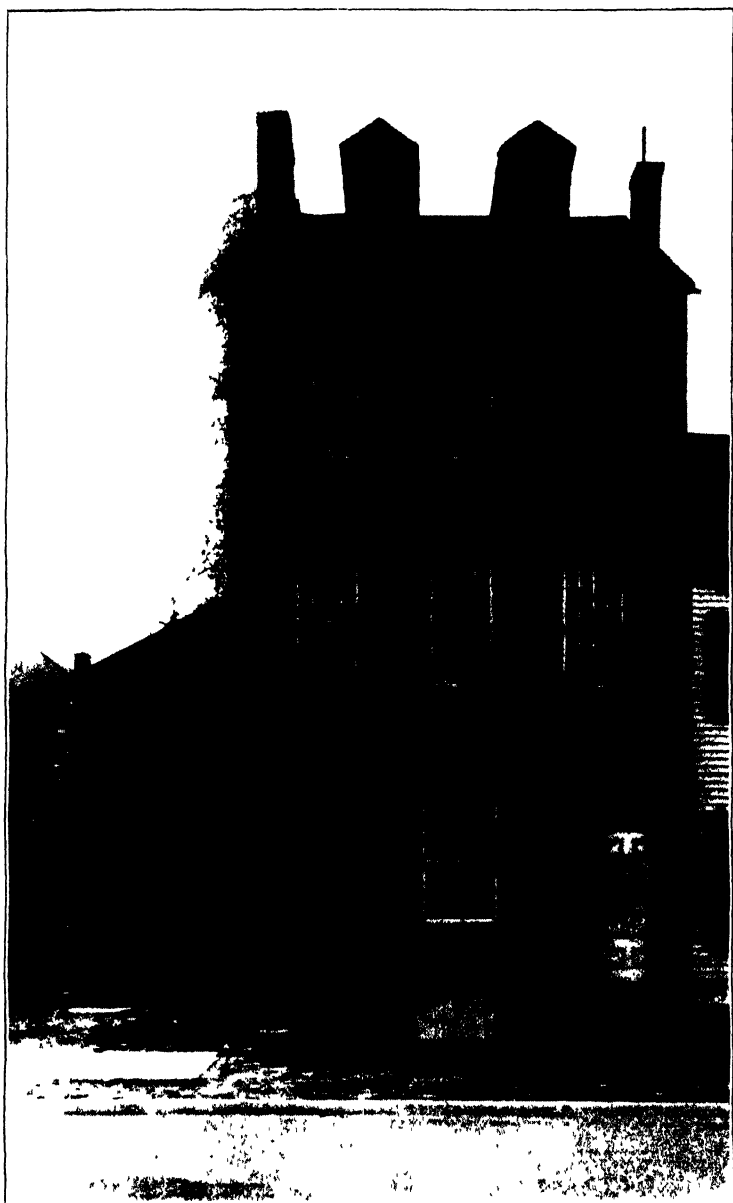
Out on the streets again we found other places known to Washington. Leadbeater's Drug Store, so often visited by him, was closed a few years ago, after it had served people of six generations. The abandoned building looks lonely. It finds not a friend in the block. From its musty files the historians have selected orders in the handwriting of the Washingtons, Lees, Custises, and Fairfaxes.

"Mrs. Washington desires Mr. Stabler to send by bearer a quart bottle of his best castor oil and a bill for it," reads one of the chosen memoranda.

Nearby, on our way to the home of Dr. James Craik, Washington's family physician, we passed the Coryell House. The tumbling ruins awakened an enthusiasm which no rehabilitated cottage could inspire. Unlike other homes in the vicinity, it sets back from the street. Interest lies, however, in its former owner. The story of the Coryell family revealed the profound personal influence of the General.

"George Coryell with his father ferried Washington across the Delaware River on Christmas night, 1776, when the General made his surprise attack on Trenton," my informant explained in relating the episode. "After the Revolution, admiration for the Commander resulted in the son making his home in Alexandria. At the funeral of Washington he helped to carry the casket from the house to the tomb when the strength of one of the pallbearers failed. After the General's death he returned to his former home at Coryell's Ferry on the Delaware, where he died many years later."

Coryell's devotion was one of the finest personal trib-



HOME OF DR JAMES CRAIK, ALEXANDRIA



utes to Washington I was to find in the Mount Vernon neighborhood. The dilapidated frame structure has lost some of its windows and the loose blinds flap and creak wearily in the wind.<sup>1</sup> But as long as the crumbling building supports its roof, it will shine redolent with the memories of an owner whose only wish was to live in the light of Washington's esteem.

Returning to the sidewalk, we discovered that the house next door was the home of Dr. Craik. Wherever Washington went, this distinguished surgeon followed.<sup>2</sup> He was with the Commander at Fort Necessity, ministered to the dying Braddock, cared for General Mercer when he fell at Princeton, soothed the stricken John Custis, Washington's stepson, after the battle of Yorktown, and held the hand of both George and Martha Washington when they passed to Eternity. Washington in his will characterized him as "my old and intimate friend Dr. Craik."

"I have been hoping that some day we would find the call record and account books of Dr. Craik," my companion sighed hopefully. "We would then know how many times the General and his wife crossed that stone doorsill and the kind of ailments from which relief was sought. So far, all searches have been futile."

I had a desire to see more. The blinds of the Dr. Craik home were ajar. I climbed to the window sill and peeked through the multiple-paned window of the house he once tenanted. There were papers on the floor. Two chairs stood before the open fireplace. This was a room well known to Washington.

I rapped—once—twice—three times. Then waited.

<sup>1</sup> Lindsey, Mary, *Historic Homes and Landmarks of Alexandria, Virginia*, p.

33.

<sup>2</sup> Andrews, Marietta Minnigerode, *George Washington's Country*, pp. 307-309.

The silence was profound. A neighbor woman approached quizzically.

"Don't you know Dr. Craik has been dead a century?" she volunteered. "The house is deserted. The good doctor is buried over there in the cemetery of the old Presbyterian Meeting House."<sup>1</sup>

Slowly I came down the steps as if directed away. A misty rain had begun to fall and the walks were slippery. I hurried to the hotel. Printed on the bill of fare I found copied an invitation which another physician of Alexandria sent to a friend of Washington. It revealed more of the hospitality of those by-gone days than I had discovered on my journey. The invitation read:

"If you can eat a good fat duck, come up with us and take pot luck. Of White-backs we have got a pair, so plump, so round, so fat, so fair, an London Alderman would fight, through pies and tarts, to get one bite. Moreover we have beef or pork, that you may use your knife and fork. Come up precisely at two o'clock, the door shall open at your knock. The day 'tho wet, the streets 'tho muddy, to keep out the cold we'll have some toddy. And if perchance you should get sick, you'll have at hand, Yours, E. C. DICK."

Washington, the Citizen, never lost interest in politics. Although he must drive for miles he was one of the first appearing to cast his ballot on election day. On his last visit to the Court House to vote in the Fall of 1799 he found the stairs to the voting booth on the second floor rickety.<sup>2</sup> He weighed more than two hundred pounds. He shook the contraption with his foot.

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Alexandria Gazette*, *Ibid*, Section B, p. 2.

"Will it hold my weight?" he asked of a group nearby.

Instantly a dozen shoulders braced themselves under the upright and did not move until their distinguished fellow townsman had deposited his ballot and returned.

"I saw his last bow," reported one of the onlookers half a century later. "It was more than kingly."

For more than fifty years after Washington's death there were people in Alexandria who reminiscently recalled his upright carriage, his measured step and princely demeanor. Old John Nightingale, gravedigger until 1863, and one of the last of the pioneers, said that "in the last years, the General wore a 'cock and pinch' hat and no one who ever saw him forgot him."<sup>1</sup>

It was with actual sorrow that I left this old town. The skies had cleared. Evening and the mellow, purple haze of a dying day hung listlessly in the air. As I looked back on my journey I realized that I had traveled a long way in the footsteps of Washington. I was nearing the end. On the morrow I would visit the churches where he had worshipped.

Elsewhere along the route there were many imposing memorials to Washington's generalship. At Alexandria the whole city appeared dedicated to Washington, the Man. His civic concerns stalk the scene. Still standing is the first permanent free school of Northern Virginia, endowed by him in 1785; still in use is the old Friendship fire department he had organized in 1774.<sup>2</sup> On Shooter's Hill above the city looms the sublime Masonic Memorial, erected in stately pillars and arches to his honor on the bicentennial of his birth. Its friezes are

<sup>1</sup> Powell, Mary G., *History of Old Alexandria, Virginia*, p. 75

<sup>2</sup> Lindsey, Mary, *Ibid*, pp 38-39, Jackson, Rev Eugene B., *The Romance of Historic Alexandria*, p. 43.



decorated with stone tracings and rich profile carvings of his features. It is the National Monument of his fraternity.

Alexandria exalts Washington as the dutiful American.

The pomp of generalship and the dignity of high office are lost in the etched portrayal of Washington as the plain citizen.

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Alexandria is midway between Mount Vernon and Washington, D. C. It is on the ten-mile boulevard road known as the Washington Memorial Highway. Interesting places to visit include the Carlyle House (1752); Friendship Engine House (1774); Washington Free School (1775); site of Washington's town house; Christ Church; old Presbyterian Meeting House; graves of John Carlyle and Dr. James Craik; Gadsby's Tavern; and the LaFayette house where General LaFayette was entertained in 1824 on his last visit to the United States.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### WHERE GREATNESS WORSHIPPED

#### THREE VIRGINIA CHURCHES

CLOSE beside a rambling highway, leading southward through Old Virginia, snuggles the church of George Washington's manhood. Alone, it rises inarticulate in a countryside of growing crops and green pastures six miles south of Mount Vernon. It lifts no steeple to the sky; it boasts no paintings of the Masters. Without, it is as severe as a Quaker meeting place, with only a struggling ivy climbing its rear walls to break the monotony of the plain, reddish exterior.

Twice the old Pohick Church has been the prize of conquest. The British shelled this Episcopal edifice in the War of 1812 when the English gunboats came up the Potomac after leaving the National Capitol a smoking ruin. Half a century later, during the Civil War, troops from the North turned it into a stable. Union soldiers seeking notoriety carved their initials and the letters of their divisions in its brick doorways.

Built in the Colonial days when the church and the state were a unit, it has prospered with the Republic under their separation. Its barren outside is like a feudal stronghold set on a swell of ground in this wide open country. Under the trees about its doorway is a churchyard of crumbling headstones, revealing stories of life as simple as are recorded in the narrative of Gray's *Elegy*. I bowed there in reverence.

Pohick received its name from a nearby stream which the Indians called Powheek. In detail the structure is rectangular; bare, cold, and uninteresting. Fact and fable blend, however, to weave legendary tales about this historic church. Like a fireside poem they consecrate the pages of the life of Washington.

The spirit of Washington's religion is not dead. It offers its distilled essence for all generations to lift the level of their existence to the heights of his animated purpose. The Reverend Lee Massey, minister of Truro Parish and Pohick Church, wrote:<sup>1</sup>

"I never knew so constant an attendant at church as Washington. And his behavior in the house of God was ever so deeply reverential that it produced the happiest effect on my congregation, and greatly assisted me in my pulpit labors."

Bigotry was unknown to his soul. Hatred he could not comprehend. Much of the spiritual understanding and tolerance among the divergent peoples of this Nation come today from his sane guidance. No narrow theology cramped his efforts.

From a reading of his utterances I found his creative religious convictions buttressed on six pillars:<sup>2</sup>

I. ADVOCATES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

To the United Baptist Churches, he wrote:

"Every man conducting himself as a good citizen and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience."

<sup>1</sup> Wigmore, Francis Marion, *The Old Parish Churches of Virginia*, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> For a compilation of Washington's religious opinions, see *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, pp. 26-27; pp. 50-59; pp. 256-260; pp. 500-522.

## 2. FAVORS PRAYERS IN THE ARMY.

While in service he ordered :

"That the Troops may have an opportunity of attending public worship, as well as take some rest after the great fatigue they have gone through, the General in future excuses them from fatigue duty on Sunday (except at the Ship Yards, or special occasions) until further orders."

## 3. SCORNS THE USE OF PROFANITY.

When the encampment was at Middlebrook the well-known order against profanity was issued on May 31. Washington characterized it as the "foolish and scandalous practice of profane swearing" and "as a means to abolish this and every other species of immorality Brigadiers are enjoined to take effectual care, to have divine service duly performed in their respective brigades."

## 4. SEEKS SUPPORT OF THE ALMIGHTY.

When about to retire from the army, he appealed to God :

"I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life, by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and those who have the superintendence of them to his holy keeping."

## 5. RELIGIOUS OPINIONS SHOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH OFFICE-HOLDING.

Replying to a communication of the New Church in Baltimore, he said :

"In this enlightened age, and in this land of equal liberty, it is our boast that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the laws, nor deprive him of attaining and holding the highest offices that are known in the United States."

## 6. FOR A BROAD CHRISTIAN TOLERANCE.

Writing in 1789 he declared:

"It affords edifying prospects indeed to see Christians of every denomination dwell together in more charity, and conduct themselves in respect to each other with a more Christian-like spirit than ever they have done in any former age or in any other nation."

To the Clergy of different denominations in Philadelphia in 1797, he complimented their harmony:

"Believing as I do that religion and morality are the essential pillars of civil society, I view with unspeakable pleasure that harmony and brotherly love which characterize the clergy of different denominations, as well in this as in other parts of the United States, exhibiting to the world a new and interesting spectacle, at once the pride of our country and the surest basis of universal harmony."

Dr. John C. Fitzpatrick, the foremost authority on Washington's diaries, finds that during times of stress and danger Washington was more punctual in church duties.<sup>1</sup> A careful survey of his notes reveals that he records going to church six times in 1771; nine times in 1772; and five times in the first eight Sundays after the death of Patsy Custis in 1773; and thirteen times in 1774, "including the week day service of prayer and fast on June 1" when the Boston Port Bill went into operation. While President he went to church regularly.

Before the Revolution, when at Mount Vernon, he usually attended Pohick. For this old church he had a warm attachment. He was instrumental in its establishment on the present site. There was a dispute over

<sup>1</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol. I, p. 519.



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the relocation. George Mason, Washington's close friend, had about convinced the assembled parishioners that the original church site would be more convenient. He pleaded with them not to desert the bones of their forefathers. Then Washington arose with surveyors' maps and charts to demonstrate that the new site would be more central. His argument turned the tide. A large majority voted for the new location. Washington was placed on the building committee. Later, the church records disclose that on November 20, 1772, the vestry sold a large box pew:

"No. twenty-eight, one of the center pews adjoining the north Isle and next to the Communion Table, to Colo. George Washington at the price of sixteen pounds."<sup>1</sup>

George Washington was broadminded over matters religious. While there is no record that he ever attended in Virginia any other church than the Episcopalian, in other states he went with reverence to the services in Dutch, Catholic, Quaker, German, Presbyterian, Congregational, and his own, the Anglican.<sup>2</sup>

A recent survey discloses that on his travels he attended more than forty different churches of various denominations. While in Philadelphia to preside over the sessions of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, he recorded in his diary that he went one Sunday "to the Romish Church to high mass," and a week later "heard Bishop White preach."<sup>3</sup>

To his friends among the Hebrews he expressed the

<sup>1</sup> Wigmore, Francis Marion, *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *History of George Washington Bicentennial Celebration*, Vol I, p. 519; also Vol III, p. 161

<sup>3</sup> Bishop White was the first Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Philadelphia.



hope that the new Nation would free itself from the poison of racial fanaticism:

"I rejoice, that a spirit of liberality and philanthropy is much more prevalent than it formerly was among the enlightened nations of the earth, and that your brethren will benefit thereby in proportion as it shall become still more extensive."

Within the Mount Vernon neighborhood are three rural churches associated with Washington—Pohick, Old Falls at Falls Church, and Christ Church of Alexandria. All are of the same formal design. In each his pew awaits his coming. While Washington served as vestryman of the Falls Church and subscribed to the oath, he does not seem to have been regular in attendance.<sup>1</sup>

After 1773 his Sunday going was largely to Christ Church at Alexandria. During eleven years he attended twenty-three vestry meetings and was unavoidably absent on eight.

"Why is it called Falls Church?" I inquired of a woman who lived close by.

"This is one town in Virginia which has been named after the church," she responded. "And the church first received its name 'The Falls Church' because it was the church nearest the Falls of the Potomac."

The city has grown up and around the church, set in the center of the business section. One experiences a slight shock to come upon the historic edifice and its cemetery of white headstones in so unexpected a setting.

I alighted to walk along the winding pathways be-

<sup>1</sup> Wigmore, Francis Marion, *Ibid*, p. 43.

fore entering the temple. Trees large and old—tulip, poplar, and oak—spread the shade of a cloistered quiet. I stood with uncovered head among the graves of pioneers and patriots. The edifice is of rich simplicity. I tried to fancy the figure of Washington as he came here as a warden in 1763. He must have enjoyed the delightful serenity under the aisles of venerable trees. Defender of the old order, he was to become the pilot of the transition in the affairs of Church and Nation that tried men's souls. He wove his religion into life's eternal realities.

As I ruminated, the pastor appeared at the doorway. We talked a long time.

"Memories of other days are thick in such hallowed shrines as Old Falls Church," the Rev. Clarence Stuart McClellan, Jr., told me. "Here through the purpling shadows that cross the gold and silver of the light of today come forth such spirit forms as those of Augustine Washington and his son, George; of George Mason, author of the Bill of Rights, and Henry Fairfax, gentleman, soldier, and benefactor."

There is no gloom here.

Pohick, Old Falls, Christ Church have been awakened from their peaceful sleep and are learning the lessons of modern life. They have been turned into Washington shrines. Their past is glorified by his devoted service.

Back again in Alexandria, I went direct to Christ Church. It was near the close of a golden day. Since the death of Washington a bell tower has been erected. At the entrance I read a memorial to Washington's pallbearers:

# GEORGE WASHINGTON

IN MEMORY OF THE HONORARY PALL-BEARERS

OF

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

Fellow Townsmen, Brother Masons,

Trusted Friends, Comrades

In the Cause of American Independence.

COL. CHARLES SIMMS

COL. DENNIS RAMSAY

COL. WILLIAM PAYNE

COL. GEORGE GILPEN

COL. PHILIP MARSTELLER

COL. CHARLES LITTLE

IN MEMORY ALSO OF THE LIEUTENANTS

WILLIAM MOSS

JAMES TURNER, JR.

LAWRENCE HOOFF

GEORGE WISE

OF THE 106TH REGIMENT OF THE VIRGINIA MILITIA  
WHO BORE HIS BODY TO THE TOMB DECEMBER 18.

"Unable to locate the graves of all the pallbearers, interested Masons erected this memorial here instead," the guide informed me as we entered.

The interior of the church has a starkly bare appearance. On either side of the three-windowed chancel are tablets. On one is a scroll of the Ten Commandments; on the other are inscribed the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. The quaint lettering was done in 1773. How often Washington had read those lettered panels! His pew—No. 5—was near the front of the church. It is still maintained as when he last appeared at services.

He came with the family in a coach of four. An usher escorted them to his pew. A servant followed with a foot-warmer in cool weather. The service and sermon lasted two hours.

"Usually the General sat in the corner with his back to the wall, but with his good ear toward the minister," droned the guide.

On the walls are memorials to Washington and Robert E. Lee. Each in his day was a member of this congregation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mathews, James T., Jr., *The Romance of Old Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia*, p. 19.

After retiring from the Presidency, Washington came here more regularly than before. He continued as a member and contributor until his death. His funeral service was conducted by the minister of the parish. I knelt in his pew to say a prayer to his memory.

Caught by the hand of fancy and held by the spell of Washington's captivating influence, I had been traveling for weeks, following through wilderness, over mountains and into the thrall of great cities. I had viewed with eyes of homage the sweeping landscapes he had known so well. I had stood with him upon the shell-swept ramparts his strategy had defended. I had rested in Independence Hall where his counsel among patriots had turned chaos into a Republic. I had ventured to walk the streets with him when, as President, the hysteria of foreign war beat threateningly around his graying head. I had knelt with him in the churches of his Fathers.

Once more I was returning to Mount Vernon. I would rest for the moment with his spirit of those days in fame-deserved retirement. I would linger to see the sun go down in all its dazzling glory upon the Potomac—the scene of his greatest joys.

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Pohick Church is ten miles south of Alexandria on the Jefferson-Davis Highway, U. S. No. 1. The place is marked. Falls Church is on Highway No. 211. Alexandria is six miles from the National Capital. The three churches attended by Washington are within a circle of fifteen miles from Mount Vernon.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WATCHING THE POTOMAC ROLL BY

#### MOUNT VERNON RETIREMENT

MOUNT VERNON has long been the shrine of the Nation. I came upon it one Spring afternoon when the whole countryside was sun-flooded and the shrubbery touched into life with a green loveliness. The sight was glorious. The exhilarant atmosphere breathed deeply the welcoming spirit of a homecoming event.

Along the way the plantation fences of solid stone and brick were graced with a drapery of shining ivy. At the great arched entrance crowds were gathering. Silently I watched the hundreds press anxiously by.

"Will Washington be there?" asked a little girl of her mother, who in haste almost dragged her to the gateway.

"No! but we shall see his tomb!"

There were other questions, but these were all lost in the babble. Slightly different in interest and enthusiasm was this setting from that which welcomed home General Washington on March 15, 1797, at the close of eight years of service as President. All the way from Philadelphia his six-day journey had been impeded with throngs anxious to honor him. At the arrival home his old neighbors crowded about his doorway, in the same adoration that his new-made friends

today went peering into every nook and room that they might feel his presence.

George Washington still lives in spirit at Mount Vernon. Not so much the soldier who led armies from defeat to a final victory; not the founder of an organized government, but the father of a home and the farmer of many acres in retirement. Within the shades of the trees he planted, in the rooms in which he lived, over the farms he arranged for cultivation lingers the mellow touch of other days which brings him close.

In the comforts of retreat George Washington now holds open house at Mount Vernon each week-day to meet his friends. Today it seemed that he had just laid off the cloak of statecraft.

Maybe the greeting of old friends at Alexandria, his home town and voting place, close to Mount Vernon, upon his return from Philadelphia, has wiped away the anxieties of the journey.

"On one side I am called upon to remember the parrot," he remarked as the coach trundled homeward over rutty roads, "and on the other to remember the dog. For my own part I should not pine much if both were forgot."

After his retirement to Mount Vernon Washington seemed to live in a dream that turned his thoughts backward on a record, the achievements of which he could little understand. Always the people came—the old friends and the curious—until his home was like a wayside inn.

I followed through the cobblestone-bedded gateway where the scores of guests, including LaFayette, had come at his invitation. Mount Vernon's West front came into view—an imposing sanctuary of memories.

An attractive bowling green extends to the mansion. Hidden behind brick walls are the gardens. Those for flowers are on the left, and for vegetables on the right.

Because of his love for Mount Vernon, Washington spent more money on its beautification than most wealthy neighboring landowners were accustomed to do. Before he died his holdings had increased to twenty-five hundred acres. The ornamental area alone was over twenty acres, including lawns and flower gardens. The present day Mount Vernon is about four hundred and seventy acres.

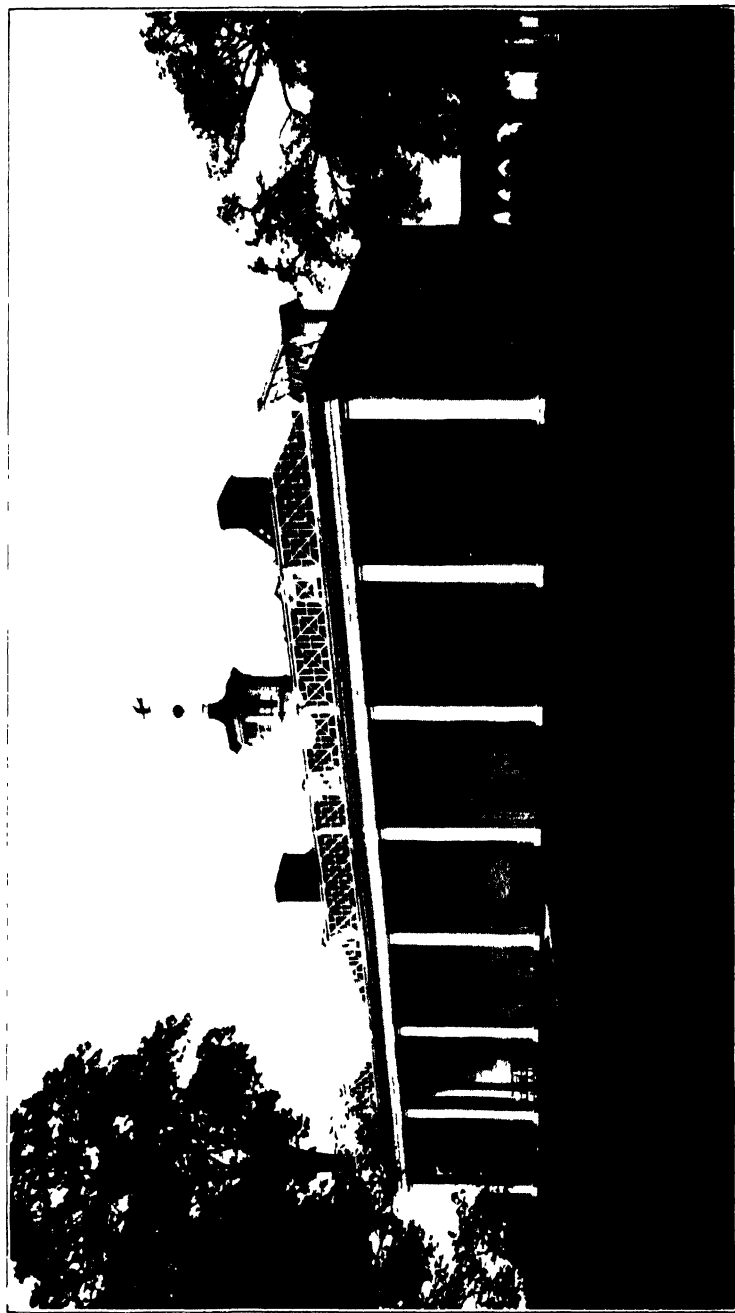
Passing under the light shade of trees he had planted, I came to buildings—white and neat. Signs on the lawn reminded me that these were the kitchen, butler's house, smokehouse, laundry, and coach house. The varied routine of our life today was carried on in his day within a single plantation.

Before the large central door bearing the original brass knocker I paused a moment before entering the hallowed precincts.

Washington's home is much as he left it. Most of the furniture he willed away has come back. The clock on the stairs was stopped at the hour of his death and was never started. On the walls hang the pictures and trophies he loved. Even the banquet hall is ready to receive his distinguished guests.

Then out on the portico, where all the notables were entertained and where at last his own funeral was held, all was serene. The outlook from the porch commands a broad view of the Potomac. Afternoon hours were spent here by the master watching its waters roll by.

Freed from official responsibility, those last two years of his life still carried many obligations. Decay



FRONT VIEW OF MOUNT VERNON AT THE PRESENT TIME





and neglect had ruled his farm and acres during his absence. After his return, every morning before sun-up saw the former President riding over his farms.

"Where could the General be found?" inquired a soldier of the ranks late one morning at the mansion.

"Go out in the fields and look for an old gentleman with a white hat and an umbrella, riding alone on horseback," came the direction.

These morning rambles were the most pleasant that its owner had ever spent at Mount Vernon. No longer did he have his kennel of dogs, for he never went fox-hunting now; the enclosure for deer, at the foot of the lawn before Mount Vernon, had rotted away, but poachers on the farms, where the deer still roamed, were treated with severity. He acted as his own game warden. To have time to do the things that must be done each day required a careful planning of his hours.

"I begin my daily work with the sun," he explained to one who inquired the course of his life after he left the Presidency. "If my hirelings are not in their places at the time, I send them messages expressive of my sorrow at their indisposition.

"Having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things farther, and the more they are probed the deeper I find the wounds are which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years. By the time I have accomplished these matters, breakfast, a little after seven o'clock, is ready.

"This being over, I mount my horse and ride about my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which time I rarely miss seeing faces, come, as they say, out of respect for me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer as well? And how dif-

ferent this from having a few social friends at a cheerful board? The usual time of sitting at table, a walk and tea, brings me within the dawn of candlelight."

Down by the corral I walked, hoping by some chance I might hear the nicker of "Nelson" or see the ghost of this horse which history has made famous.

When Washington lived, every morning the daily round of routine affairs was halted. A sharp whistle or a call would summon the famous charger he had ridden at the Yorktown surrender. Other horses he had sent into battle, but none so courageous as "Nelson." This light sorrel with white face and legs he sent into retirement at the close of the War. Never again was "Nelson" ridden. That charger, like Bishop, the General's bodyguard—a gift of Braddock—spent the last days of life in the peace and contentment of Mount Vernon.

Much as Washington loved the retreat of Mount Vernon, he could not keep aloof from politics. It was during the Summer of 1798 that he became convinced that the Federalists might lose control of the Congressional district in which Mount Vernon was situated. John Marshall, of Richmond, later Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, had just returned from a successful mission to France, and the demonstration of approval on his acts convinced Washington of his availability.

"I received an invitation from General Washington," writes Marshall in recounting the story of the meeting, "to accompany his nephew on a visit to Mount Vernon."

They arrived early in September. Desiring to make a presentable appearance, the two dusty visitors stopped about a mile from Mount Vernon to make a change of

clothing in a little woods. Halting their horses they threw off their messy garments and then examined their saddle-bag for their clothing. Instead of fresh linens, bottles of whiskey and soiled apparel of working men fell out of the pack. Their predicament produced such loud peals of laughter that the owner of the grounds was attracted to the scene. When Washington saw the plight of his friends he rolled on the ground in raucous amusement.

Four days were spent by this company on the piazza at Mount Vernon endeavoring to persuade John Marshall to become a candidate. Marshall was stubborn in his refusal. On the last day, Washington, pointing to the beauty of the Potomac and its surroundings, told how he gave up these comforts to answer the call of the country when he was chosen President. This argument proved too much for Marshall and he consented to enter the contest. He was elected. The unfolding beauties from the Mount Vernon piazza helped to foster the career of the greatest Chief Justice the Nation has ever had.

When Washington retired to Mount Vernon he expressed the wish that he might never stray farther than twenty miles from its confines. But this area he seems to have policed well.

One day in the Fall of 1798 an old-fashioned chaise turned over on the road not far from Mount Vernon. Two riders headed in different directions witnessed the accident and came galloping to the rescue. After they had righted the carriage and revived the lady occupant, they tugged away in the hot sun to get the vehicle back on the road. This accomplished, the New England couple drove away, leaving the two horse-

men watching. Finally the taller of the two offered to dust the coat of the other.

"Mr. Bernard, I believe?" remarked the tall man. "I had the pleasure of seeing you perform last winter in Philadelphia. I have heard of you since, from several of my friends in Annapolis. If you will ride up to my house, which is not a mile distant, you can prevent any ill effects from this exertion, by a couple hours of rest."

For a moment the noted English actor, John Bernard, who had come from Annapolis a few days before to visit friends in Alexandria, stood amazed.

"I looked around for his dwelling," said Bernard, "and he pointed to a building, which, the day before, I had spent an hour in contemplating—Mount Vernon. 'Mount Vernon,' I exclaimed, and then drawing back with a stare of wonder, 'Have I the honor of addressing General Washington?'"

"With a smile, whose expression of benevolence I have rarely seen equalled, he offered his hand and replied, 'An odd sort of introduction, Mr. Bernard, but I am pleased you can play so good a part in private and without a prompter.'"

Suddenly, when I stood in the hall at Mount Vernon I lost the atmosphere of Washington, the man of peace. Hanging on one wall in a glass case is the key of the French Bastille, presented to Washington by LaFayette in 1789. On the other side is a cabinet containing four swords worn by him during periods of his military leadership. One was used during the Braddock campaign; a second is a dress sword; a third was made for him at the Solingen Armory in Prussia; and a fourth he wore when resigning his command at Annapolis in

1783 and again at his inauguration in New York in 1789.<sup>1</sup>

"And is there no sword or remembrance of General Washington when war threatened with France in the Summer of 1798?" I asked an attendant.

"There is nothing, because he was not in active service," was the reply.

All during the Summer of 1798 a war cloud hung over the Nation. Envoys of the United States had been insulted by the French officials. One day, while Washington was busy inspecting his hay-making, a visitor approached on horseback.

"War is on again, General, this time with France; I bring you the will of the Nation," said James McHenry, Secretary of War, handing the veteran commander a new commission as Lieutenant General and Commander-in-Chief. Sitting on his horse, the General examined it carefully. The appointment bore the signature of John Adams, President of the United States, and the date July 4, 1798.

"So long as I am able, I shall not refuse a call of duty," responded Washington.

On July 13, he officially accepted the command with a reserve as to field service. Early in November he made a trip to Philadelphia for a consultation on military affairs. He returned to Mount Vernon on November 13. This was his last journey. The tide of French sentiment waned in a few months and war was averted.

Even with servants the care of Mount Vernon fell heavily on its owner. The carpenters and repairmen

<sup>1</sup> Wister, Owen, *The Seven Ages of Washington*, gives the best picture of Washington in retirement.

left a litter of dirt as they sought to rejuvenate the building. The number of visitors increased, and many of them, enjoying the comforts of Southern hospitality, hung on for days. Despairing of the added burdens, Washington wrote to his sister, Betty Lewis, at Fredericksburg, offering a position to her son, Lawrence Lewis, to help entertain. By his acceptance, Love and Destiny wove a pretty story in Old Virginia.

When Washington was President, Nellie Custis, a granddaughter of his wife by her first marriage, although only a girl in her teens, became the belle of the administration. Her father, an officer under Washington at Yorktown, died, leaving four children. The two younger, Nellie and George, Washington begged the favor of rearing.

"She has more perfection of form, of color, of softness, of firmness of mind than I have ever seen before," wrote the artist Latrobe, who painted a picture of Washington during his last year as President.

And now when Lawrence Lewis came to be a member of the Mount Vernon household a friendship quickly ripened into love.

Washington's last birthday, February 22, 1799, became the occasion for the wedding. At the lower steps of the long stairs, Washington met her that evening and escorted her to the parlor where Mr. Lewis and she were married. Accounts of the event differ. Some claim it was a brilliant affair. Washington's diary records the event in brief terms:

"Morning raining. Mercury at 30. Wind a little more to the northward—afterwards very strong from the northwest and turning clear and cold. The Rev. Mr. Davis and George Calvert came to dinner, and

Miss Custis was married about candlelight to Mr. Lawrence Lewis.”

Washington's gift was a harpsichord. Later, in his will he bequeathed them land that became Woodlawn,<sup>1</sup> famous in the early years of the century for its hospitality. I visited the music room that still bears the name of Nellie Custis. There was the harpsichord and many of her other belongings. A quaint old music book bears her autograph. She is still the youthful belle the Mount Vernon people come to see.

Another room of interest was the library where many of Washington's letters were written. Washington's library contained few of the classics. It offered books on agriculture, and in the deep cupboards were many maps. Long before his death Washington sensed that he was dealing with destiny. Perhaps he wanted to shape the course that history was to take. Anyway during the last years of his life he busied himself editing his letters, changing the form of many. No author of the period wrote as much. But the tone is not literary. It bears the cold stamp of fact and record.

Washington was looking backward. He wanted posterity to see his acts in the most favorable light. But the old mansion is the visible evidence of his love for home and devotion to country. No book of letters can re-create the life which his spirit has instilled into the very atmosphere of Mount Vernon.

Away from the West entrance two little pathways lead afield—in opposite directions—one to the flower gardens, and the other to the tomb. Washington was again a farmer. His letters are crowded with sugges-

<sup>1</sup> Lindsey, Mary, *Historic Homes and Landmarks of Alexandria, Virginia*, p. 48.



tions of trees, plants, and seeds, the methods of fertilization and planting.

This acreage became Washington's delight as he grew old. He planned it with great care. Visits of distinguished guests were remembered by plantings made by them. LaFayette and Jefferson have memorial trees. It would be difficult to find a conservatory with more bounteous offerings in bloom or more exquisite designs in shrubs. Few men had a keener appreciation for trees than Washington. He made plantings at every convenient place and had the artistic eye of a landscape gardener. Red cedar, sassafras, dogwood, sycamores, oaks, hickories, and walnuts became a part of the fundamental design. A few of the cedar of Lebanon, coffee bean, European elm, and Persian walnut were put in for experiment, but his plantings were largely of the native species. His flower garden was more generous than that of his neighbors, including the various tulips, French and African marigolds, lupines, mallows, sweet peas, hollyhocks, Canterbury bells, and roses in profusion.

A rose bush near the center of the garden caught my attention. Even on this April day it braved a single offering. I held the fragrant flower, inspecting its gorgeous heart, until a voice broke my fantastic reverie. It was a flower of history, the attendant was saying. Its petals were flushed with the tears of sacrifice. That rose bush which Washington named for his mother has scattered its progeny of beauty and loveliness over a whole continent:

"The Mary Washington Rose."

## CHAPTER XXV

### TRAIL'S END

#### WASHINGTON'S TOMB

A SPIRIT of reverence touches the hundreds who make daily pilgrimage to the tomb of Washington. His final resting place at Mount Vernon lies in a little valley that, for the moment, reminded me of the Garden of Gethsemane. Within sight the Potomac rolls restlessly on toward the ocean.

To taste the sublime fullness of Mount Vernon, the traveler should arrive there on an early Spring afternoon when the Easter promises of life and hope stir the soul. All seems quiet and peaceful, except for the rustle of steps of many pilgrims. Veneration robs the resting place of its gloom.

An old colored man stands close by. He answers questions in whispers. He looks so much like the pictures of Billy Lee,<sup>1</sup> Washington's bodyguard, that I approached him for information.

"My grandfather was a slave on this here plantation," he responded. "I was sure born here."

"But the tomb in which Washington sleeps is not the one in which he was placed at his death," he explained.

A few days before the death of the General he had told his aide, Lawrence Lewis, that the next piece of work to be done at Mount Vernon was to be the building of a new tomb, and he indicated the spot.

<sup>1</sup> When Bishop, the bodyguard who was presented by General Braddock to Washington, grew old he was retired and Billy Lee took over his duties. Billy was purchased in 1768 for sixty pounds, served with Washington through the War, and was always visited by comrades who came to see the General. Billy Lee's picture is shown in the Washington family group painted by Edward Savage about 1795. Engravings of this picture were sold by the thousands all over the East.

"For after all, I may require it before the rest," the General is reported to have said.

When I neared the grated doorway of the crypt, with the sarcophagi of the General and of Martha in plain view, the colored attendant grew more confidential. The bodies had been brought from the old tomb a few rods away to the new resting place in 1831. Memorial exercises were conducted with Henry Clay as one of the principal participants.

"Before Nellie Custis died there was no longer room within the vault," the colored guard explained. "By agreement among the relatives the tomb was locked and the key thrown into the Potomac."

He pointed to the graves and monuments around the entrance.

"And when Nellie died they buried her not far from the doorway. The General always liked her, sir. He would be glad to know that she was near."

Lifting my eyes, I saw that the ivy draping the doorway is restrained from covering a white marble plate at the very apex of the tomb. Above the doorway appears this simple memorial:

WITHIN THIS ENCLOSURE  
REST  
THE REMAINS OF  
GENL. GEORGE WASHINGTON

One who sees the simplicity of the tomb of Washington would think that all arrangements for his death had been made by the General. Nothing could be farther from the fact. In September he had received a letter advising him of the death of his brother Charles.

"I was the first and now the last of my father's children by a second marriage who remain," he wrote to his cousin, Colonel Burgess Ball. "When I shall be



TOMB OF GEORGE AND MARTHA WASHINGTON AT MOUNT VERNON



called upon to follow them is known only to the Giver of life. When the summons comes I shall endeavor to obey it with a good grace."

Too long had he waited for the retreats of Mount Vernon to be disquieted now. Washington was not afraid of death. When, as President, long illness confined him, he had remarked to the physician that he was ready.

No disease held him as its prey. In those last years of retirement his plans for the future seemed each day to expand. He was shaping Mount Vernon to his every like and eager pleasure. But physically he was growing old. No longer was he able to sit up late or dance for hours without tiring. Friends in Alexandria desired his attendance at a series of parties to begin in the early Winter of 1799, one month before his death.

"Mrs. Washington and myself have been honored with your polite invitation to the assemblies of Alexandria this winter," he responded, "and thank you for this mark of attention; but alas! our dancing days are no more."

Dinners with his friends he still enjoyed. With his wife they drove with the coach of four over to spend December 7 with the Bryan Fairfax family on Great Hunting Creek. Four days later the Fairfax family returned the visit. The Christmas season of entertainment among families was beginning early. The spirit of Southern hospitality glowed at Mount Vernon as it did in the first days.

Thursday was a day of cold and sleet and rain. Washington went out in it to do some work. Business must receive attention. On Friday he waded through three inches of snow to mark trees for cutting. Fences

must be erected in the Spring and now was the time to prepare. That afternoon he wrote a detailed letter to his manager—the last letter from his hand.

That night, Friday, December 13, Washington made this last entry in his diary :

“Morning snowing, and about three inches deep. Wind at N. E. and Mer. at 30. Cards. Snowing till 1 o'clock and about 4 it became perfectly clear. Wind in the same place but not hard. Mer. 28 at night.”

It was near midnight when he retired. He had been occupied in the library.

“I came as soon as my business was accomplished,” he told his wife, upon entering the room for retirement. “You well know that through a long life it has been my unvaried rule never to put off until tomorrow the things which should be performed today.”

Toward morning he was seized with a chill. All apprehension was allayed when he refused to allow Mrs. Washington to summon immediate aid. As the first rays of morning fell across the bleak and wintry landscape at Mount Vernon, Tobias Lear, the confidential secretary, became alarmed. Medical aid was summoned.

Nothing registers the progress made by science in the past one hundred and fifty years better than the medical treatment given to General Washington. Physicians then bled a patient in the hope of relief. Nearly all diseases were so treated. Today it is the uniform opinion of medical science that no treatment could have been more detrimental to recovery from the disease from which the General suffered. It sapped the vitality when strength was needed.

Quinsy had fastened its grasp upon his throat. As

the day passed he grew weaker. He breathed with some difficulty. He could take no food. He became resigned.

"I am dying, sir, but I am not afraid to die," he said, turning to his physician and comrade, Dr. James Craik, as the room grew darker and the candles were brought.

A little later he directed his wife to go to his drawer to select some papers.

"These are my wills,"<sup>1</sup> he said, selecting one and asking that the other be burned.

Now his voice grew more hollow. His breath came in rasping jerks. The hardships of sixty-seven years in woods and camp and battlefield had implanted weaknesses that must undermine health.

"What time is it?" asked the patient.

"A few moments to ten," was the reply.

Dr. Craik now sat on the edge of the bed, his eyes intent upon each convulsive breath.

The General felt his own pulse. The indomitable strength would not yield. Martha, with Bible upon her lap, was reading passages through her tears. He turned toward her. How beautiful that rounded face framed with gray hair appeared in the half-light of the candle!

The breathing stopped for a moment, hesitated. The end had come.

Dr. Craik lifted his hand and arose to cut the pendulum of the clock. It was 10:20 Saturday evening,<sup>2</sup> December 14, 1799.

<sup>1</sup>The document retained was in his own handwriting. When afterwards printed it made a good-sized booklet. The will is on display in the Fairfax Court House. Public Document, Last Will and Testament of George Washington, 62nd Congress, 1st Session, Senate Document No. 86.

<sup>2</sup>For years toy clocks were sold with hands painted on the face indicating this hour.



"I shall follow him. I have no more trials to pass through," sobbed the widow as they led her from the room.

Following an old custom, before the funeral was held the doors of the death chamber were sealed, the rooms to be unoccupied until three years had elapsed.

A century and a third have passed. I stood on the threshold of the room where Washington's life had ebbed away. The canopied, four-posted bed, the great-mother's arm-chair in which Dr. Craik sat as he watched every move of his patient, stood as they had on that memorable evening. The original furniture and personal effects—washstand, mirror, tapestry and pictures—all recall the scene as it was, most realistically. For me, the solemnity of that night still hovered within the mansion. His spirit has never departed.<sup>1</sup>

Before sun-up riders were on their way North and South to notify relatives, friends, the Congress, and the President of the United States of the death of their friend and leader.

"With perfect resignation and in full possession of his reason he closed his well-spent life," read the message of Secretary Lear in advising Congress of the General's passing.

In obedience to the commands in the will, the funeral was held three days later without pomp and ostentation. On the portico of the mansion, where he had repaired so often to visit with his family and friends, or to sit for hours watching the Potomac roll on and seeing the shades of night fall, his casket rested.

As afternoon approached, four white-robed clergymen, followed by the General's riderless horse, led the

<sup>1</sup> Lowther, Minnie Kendall, *Mount Vernon*, pp. 37-40.

procession a few rods down the hill to the family tomb. The pallbearers had been Revolutionary War heroes and prominent Masons. Some wore the faded uniforms of the Army. Brief were the ceremonies. The edifying Episcopal service was read by the Reverend Thomas Davis, Rector of Christ Church at Alexandria—the church which Washington attended in later years.

“The days of our age are three score years and ten,” intoned the clergyman, “and though men be so strong that they come to four score years, yet in their strength they but labor and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.

“So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

The Masonic service was recited. The great wooden door of the tomb stood ajar. The leaden casket was carried within. The door was closed.

Returning to a little attic window above the room where General Washington had died, his sorrowing widow lighted a candle to watch the shadows close in that first evening about the tomb. She had selected this room, high up under the rafters of the great mansion, so that she might better view his resting place. Seldom would she leave her post of sacrifice. Wrapped in memories, she looked out over the beautiful vista her husband had long admired. Among the thousands who came with messages of homage and words and prayer she saw only a few.

For three years the vigil continued. It ended May 22, 1802, when hushed relatives were told that Washington's widow was dead.

That night the little candle at the attic window remained unlighted.

## EPILOGUE

### STONES THAT SPEAK A NATION'S SOUL

*A starkly simple shaft of stone thrusts itself skyward  
from a bower of cherry blossoms.*

*Like a lodestone it draws to its silent symbolism the  
attention of every American who visits the Capital of  
his Nation.*

*It is the Washington Monument!*

*Against a gray sky it stands a pillar of cloud by day  
and, under the magic of flood lights, a pillar of fire by  
night.*

*In the morning, its pinnacle wrapped in mist, the  
observer is caught up on the wings of its majesty.*

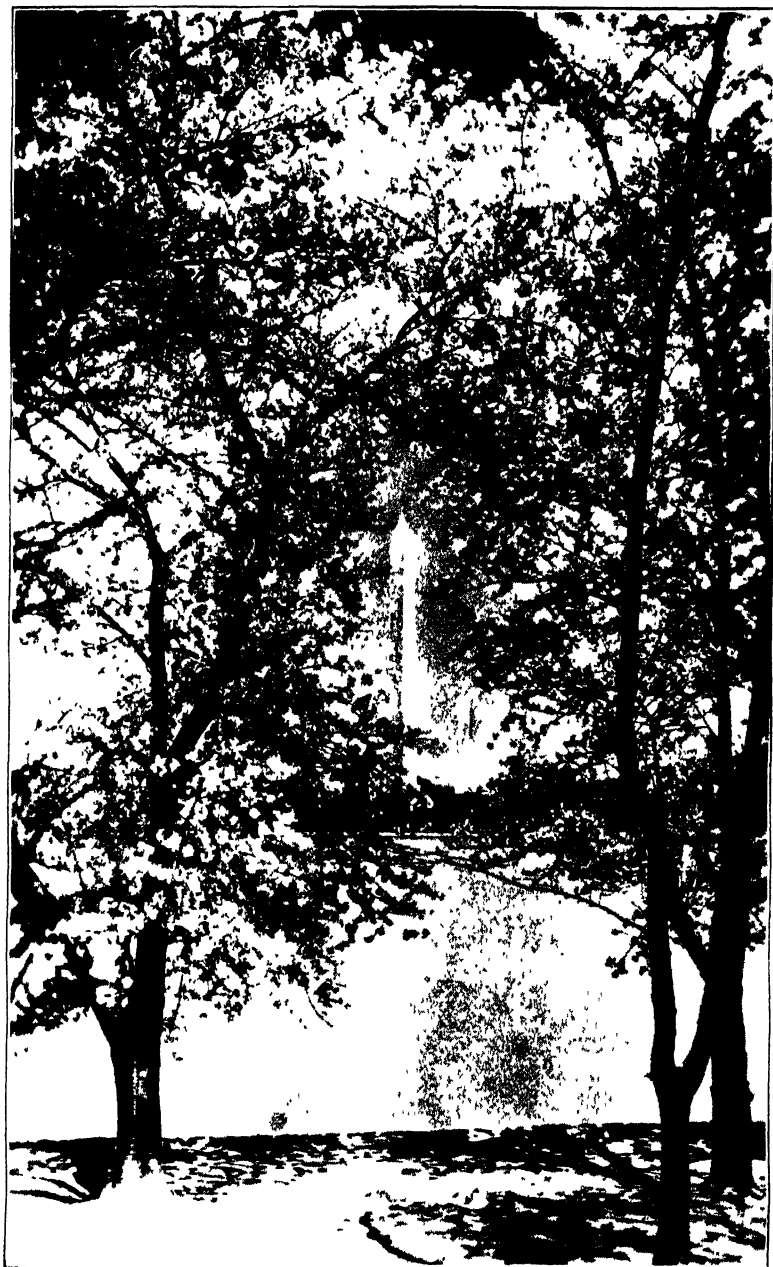
*At high noon, its clean lines are mirrored in the pool  
at the feet of the Lincoln Memorial, as if even sun and  
shadow sought to link in living reminder the Founder  
and the Preserver of the Nation.*

*This majestic memorial was authorized by the Amer-  
ican Congress shortly after the death of Washington;  
an appropriation for its erection was made on July 4,  
1848, and it reached completion eighty-five years  
after his passing.*

*The simplicity of its lines!*

*The rugged solidity of its structure!*

*The aspiring reach of its topmost stones!*



WASHINGTON MONUMENT—THE ALTAR-STONE OF A NATION



*Its manifest resistance to the eroding influences of the generations!*

*All these bespeak the sincerity, the granite strength, the loftiness of aim, and the enduring power of the character of George Washington of whose historic ministry this cenotaph stands to remind the centuries.*

*It is the altar-stone of a nation's devotion to its first great citizen.*

*Through its stones the soul of a great people speaks.*



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